

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 132

**Toldot** | The Rewarding Balance Between Body and Soul

# 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 Toldot

### Who is to Blame ?

**Rabbi** Eliav Edri shared the following tale:<sup>1</sup>

**One** man was chosen to become the general director of a large factory. Upon arriving for a meeting with the previous director to discuss the tasks and challenges of his new job, the outgoing director took him on a tour, explaining the difficulties he might encounter and how to address them. Shortly before the new director departed, the previous director invited him to his office and said:

**"Listen** here, behind my back, you can see a safe. In it, there are three envelopes. If you ever face unusual difficulties at your task, open the first envelope. If the situation worsens, open the second. And if nothing helps anymore, open the third."

**For** six months, everything was going well. However, at a certain point, the factory encountered difficulties. Unforeseen losses appeared, the balance sheet took a turn for the worse, and customers complained about the quality of the products. During a board meeting, serious accusations were made against the new general director. Remembering the envelopes, the director asked everyone to wait for a moment, hurried to the safe, and with trembling hands, opened the first envelope. Inside was a note that said, "Blame everything on the previous director."

**Encouraged**, the director returned to the meeting room, proclaiming, "Gentlemen, I inherited a factory on the brink of bankruptcy! The previous

**Parshat Toldot - Why is he Shouting ?**

director left me with a sinking ship, and I am only trying to steer it to safer shores."

"**He's** right," said the department heads. "He is not to blame; it's the fault of the former director."

**Several** more months passed, and the situation continued to deteriorate. Another meeting was convened, and once again, the director rushed to the safe. Opening the envelope, he read, "Blame the government."

**Returning** to the meeting room, he vehemently exclaimed, "The government is to blame for everything! They promised incentives, and we took on debt

relying on these incentives! We entered new retail markets, but the government did not fulfill its promises! The factory is on the brink of closure solely due to the government's neglect of our needs. It's not my fault! What do you want from me?"

**Listening** to him, the department heads nodded and said, "You must be right."

**A** few more months passed, and the situation became dire and critical. Another meeting was convened, and the attendees' expressions did not bode well. Once again, the director rushed to the safe, opened the envelope, only to read, "At this point prepare three envelopes for the next director..."

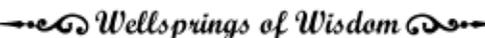
**Why is he Shouting ?**

**Rabbi** Meir Zimrot shared the following story<sup>2</sup>:

**The** prayers of the righteous Rabbi Uri of Strelisk were like a blazing fire. His soul, aflame with love for the Creator, poured out with every prayer. His custom was

to pray loudly, as it is says, "My heart grew hot within me; in my utterance a fire burns (Psalms 39:4)."

**Once**, on a Friday evening just before lighting the candles, a Jew arrived in Strelisk. He had a wallet filled



Parshat Toldot - Why is he Shouting ?

with banknotes tucked in his pocket.

**Thinking** that the best place to keep his wallet was with Rabbi Uri himself, in whose home he was staying, the guest handed the wallet to Rabbi Uri's wife for safekeeping.

**After** the evening prayers, when Rabbi Uri returned from the synagogue with the guest, Rabbi Uri's wife asked the guest, "How did you like the prayer alongside my husband ?"

"**What** can I tell you ?" the guest replied. "You can't even imagine how loudly he prays ! I can't understand why he shouts so loudly. Can't one pray quietly, like a regular person ?"

"**But** what can he do ?" Rabbi Uri's wife responded. "His soul burns with love for the Creator, he can't pray quietly."

"**My** soul also burns with love for the Creator, but I pray quietly !" the guest protested.

"**Well**, perhaps his soul burns with an even fiercer flame than yours ?"

"**Respected** madam ! Has the rabbi at least tried to pray quietly ? Let him begin praying quietly, and if it doesn't work, then he can shout..."

**The** story repeated itself after the morning prayer. Upon returning from the synagogue, Rabbi Uri's wife inquired again, "How was the prayer next to my husband ?"

"**It** was somewhat bearable until 'Nishmat.' But then it started... Such shouting, G-d forbid ! Can't one pray normally ?"

**After** the Mincha prayer, the same routine happened once more.

**When** the Sabbath ended, and Rabbi Uri and the guest returned after the evening prayer, the guest addressed Rabbi Uri's wife, "I have to leave. Thank you for your hospitality !"

"**Go** in peace," Rabbi Uri's wife responded.

"**Thank** you very much ! But can I have my wallet ?"

"**What** wallet ?"

## Parshat Toldot - Twenty Generations of Vanity

"**What** do you mean, what wallet?"

"**Have** you forgotten about the wallet that I gave you for safekeeping on Friday?"

"**I** don't know what you're talking about!"

"**What** do you mean?!" the guest started to lose his temper. "I personally handed it to you! It was filled with all the money that I possess!"

"**I** told you already, go to my husband's room; maybe he will explain the meaning of your dreams."

**The** guest, unable to contain his frustration, shouted, "Madam, this was no dream, give me back my money!"

**Rabbi** Uri's wife went and

promptly returned with the guest's wallet. Handing it to the guest, she said, "Here's your wallet. I didn't intend to take it. But look, when something really matters to you, you shouted so loudly and even the walls shook. You shouted with all your heart. Your soul was burning—that was your money on the line! And when one's soul burns, one shouts!"

**Each** person's soul burns for something different. Your soul burns for money, while my husband's soul burns with love for the Creator!"

**These** two stories highlight the superficial view of life some may have. When a person looks deeper however, everything has significance. In this week's Torah Portion, we learn about the deeper perspective of life...

## Twenty Generations of Vanity

**After** Adam tasted the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, he was expelled from paradise and entered the world as we know it.

**Adam** and Eve continued to serve the Creator. At least

five children were born to them: Cain with his twin sister, Abel with his twin sister, and Seth. These children multiplied, and the earth filled with people.

**In** the early years after the creation of the world, people still believed in the Creator and served Him. However, 662 years after Creation, during the time of Enoch, the first signs of rebellion began to appear. As written in the Torah: "And also to Seth a son was born; and he called his name Enoch, at this time man began to call upon the name of the L-rd."

**Maimonides** writes at the beginning of the 'laws of Idolatry':

"**In** the days of Enoch, men erred a great error, together the wise men of that generation. Even Enoch himself was among those who erred. Their error: They claimed, since G-d has created stars and constellations to guide the world, and set them on high, they must be worshiped and adored, and this was what the Creator wanted.

**They** began to build temples to the stars, offer sacrifices to them, and prostrate themselves before them. This led to the belief of their divine status, and G-d became forgotten."

**This** was a great error. For the honor of the king's ministers is solely due to the king himself.

**Then** false prophets appeared, claiming that the Al-mighty had told them to serve the stars and even specified which star to serve. It progressed to the point where people claimed that the stars themselves sent them messages, instructing them on what idols to make, and it went on and on. The Creator was forgotten.

**In** the generation of Enoch, there were still some boundaries of decency, but as time passed, it worsened. The world had reached a point at which it was impossible to continue.

**In** the year 1656 to Creation, the windows of heaven opened, and all the underground springs sprung forth, bringing about the Great Flood. Every living being, except for those inside the Ark, were wiped from the face of the Earth.

**A** year later, eight people exited the Ark: Noah with his wife, Shem, Ham, Japheth, and their wives. Their children began to repopulate the world.

**The** impact left by the flood was still alive in people's hearts, and they adhered to a high

**Parshat Toldot - The Ray of Sunshine**

moral standard. But suddenly, a sinister and charismatic figure emerged on the world stage: His name was Nimrod.

**He** began to gather followers around him, sowing the poisonous

seeds of a new (or forsaken) ideology. Unfortunately, he succeeded greatly. People began to "reconsider" their views, adopt the "old prejudices," and plummeted into the abyss...

**The Ray of Sunshine**

**We** no longer have photographs from those times, but we can imagine how beautiful the world looked then. nurtured landscapes, lush greenery stretching to the horizon, crystal-clear waters, fresh air. A wide assortment of animals, the chirping of exotic birds...

**After** a day's work, people would come and listen to Nimrod's passionate speeches. He spoke so captivatingly about the latest discoveries, and of cultural progress and advancement.

**However,** from a spiritual perspective things were quite bleak, a cloud of impurity had obscured the light of the Creator, and darkness was thickening. Many demons and evil spirits dwelled in the many places where idolatry and adultery took place. Even the air was thoroughly poisoned...

**It** was against this backdrop, that our holy forefather Abraham appeared.

**In** the year 1948 from the Creation of the world, a child was born to Terach, the owner of a prestigious company that manufactured and marketed idols, and to his wife Amatlai. At first, the child was obedient, and like all the other members of society, served idols, attended Nimrod's lectures, knowing them by heart, and showing great promise.

**But** something happened to him over time...

**He** suddenly began to say strange things. About the world having a single Creator who created it in six days, and that this Creator still governs the world to this day... Moreover, he spoke

Parshat Toldot - A Renewed Soul

about it so convincingly that not even Nimrod could come up with an adequate response.

**They** tried to reeducate Abraham, explain that with such views, he had no future. The world had changed, there was societal progress, that one should respect their parents, who had raised him differently. When logical arguments had failed, they decided to prevent him from influencing the people in the most violent way. Abraham was thrown into a burning furnace.

**However**, for some inexplicable reason, nothing happened to him, he came out of the furnace unscathed.

**People** began to think. The unquestioned authority of Nimrod was shaken, and Abraham's authority began to rise. Study groups were formed in many places to learn the fundamentals of faith, and several yeshivot were established.

**The** world began to purify itself.

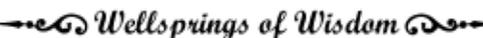
**A Renewed Soul**

**In** the spring of 2048 to the creation of the world, Abraham and Sarah gave birth to a son whom they named Yitzchak.

**Yitzchak** was born into an entirely different atmosphere. His father, Abraham, and his mother, Sarah, were on such a high spiritual level that they served as a "chariot" for the Divine manifestation in this world. They dedicated their entire lives to

teaching people faith and the kindness of the Creator.

**When** Yitzchak was 37 years old, he went through the divine trial of the Akedah (binding). The holy Shelah writes<sup>3</sup> that when Yitzchak was bound on the altar on Mount Moriah and Abraham took a knife to sacrifice him, Yitzchak's soul departed from his body. In His mercy, the Al-mighty revived him and gave him a new holy soul of the



3. Genesis, Vayerah Har Hamoriah 5.

**Parshat Toldot - Childhood Memories**

highest level. Yitzchak ascended to the level of the Adam before sin who similarly was given a soul directly from the Al-mighty, not by means of a father and mother.

**Three** years passed since, and at the age of forty, Yitzchak

got married. After twenty years of infertility, in the year 2018, a child's cry was heard in the house of Yitzchak and Rivka: they had given birth to twins. One was named Yaakov, and the other Esav.

**Childhood Memories**

**Yaakov** and Esav began their life's journey. From a young age, they absorbed an atmosphere of holiness and awe of G-d. The exalted moments of Shabbat, the stories of the righteous, and the spiritual greatness of yore. Yitzchak and Rivka served as role models for them, and they took their first steps in recognizing the Creator.

**Here**, a brief digression to clarify a concept in spiritual growth:

**In** the six days of creation, when the Creator formed all creatures, they either belonged to heaven or earth, to the material or

the spiritual worlds, the spiritual or the physical, each creature had a clear distinction as to which category they belong. The only creature made up of two opposing components fused in one, is the human being, whose body is made of dust, while the soul is a "part of the Al-mighty."

**Each** person receives a soul at a certain level according to the mission assigned to them. A person's task is to continuously refine themselves, elevating their soul to a higher level. One whose soul is from the lowest of the four worlds, seeks to rise up to the world above his own, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

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

**4. In** the book "Vayelech Yosef" of Rabbi Ashlag (page 37), the following story is related: On one occasion when Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlatshov was

privileged to be in the presence of the holy Baal Shem Tov, the Baal Shem Tov said to him, "Rabbi Yechiel, do you know who your father is? Your father, Rabbi

**Parshat Toldot - Childhood Memories**

**When** a person remains at the same level, they may feel a certain level of comfort, everything runs as usual. The evil inclination has no interest in expending its forces against the person since they don't pose a threat, they are not progressing and do no harm to the forces of evil.

**However,** when a person decides to break the bonds of evil habits and wishes to progress, things start to become challenging. The evil inclination starts to exert

its forces and launches a fierce battle! This is similar to riding a bicycle: if it's hard, you're going uphill. If it's easy, you're going downhill. But if you don't keep pedaling at all, you fall...

**This** is what Rabbi Nachman of Breslov writes: know that at each level, there are 'shells' that surround the fruit and envelop holiness, as referred to in the verse, "all around the wicked they walk." And when a person tries to ascend from one level to

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

Yitzchak, was born with a very lowly soul, a soul that was lower than any other soul in the generation. Yet through his tremendous toil and effort, he merited to the level of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai!" The divine service through which Rabbi Yitzchak merited to this lofty level, was the 'service of gratitude', he gave thanks to the Creator for everything He does.

**As** Rabbi Yaakov Edelstein, wrote in 'Kuntres Mesodot Hatorah' (Part I, Chapters 1-2) regarding the attainment of a loftier soul:

**"If** the person who has only the 'Nefesh' part of the soul knew the magnitude of the divine pleasure that the person who possesses 'Ruach' feels, he would put forth much greater effort in the study of Torah and the observance of the commandments

than he does in actuality. However, he does not do this because he calculates in accordance with his understanding that if he exerts himself further, to what level will he be able to ascend, and what will be his condition? It seems to him that he is incapable of investing such great effort for such a minor difference.

**But** this is a great error many make, since if one exerts himself greatly in the service of the Creator, with time he'll merit the additional parts of the soul mentioned above, and his level will rise to a great extent, to a level that today he cannot fathom that he can reach.

**He** will also merit very lofty spiritual pleasures that if he knew existed, he would be willing to do everything to attain them."

## Parshat Toldot - The Difference Between Yaakov and Esav

another, they must go through these 'shells' to reach holiness. As soon as they ascend to a new level, the 'shells' associated with that level awaken and encase the person. They must overcome and break them, cleansing this place from the 'shells'...

**So**, when a person sees that they suddenly face various trials and difficulties despite their efforts, it's proof that they are on the right path,

### The Difference Between Yaakov and Esav

**Before** the age of thirteen, there wasn't much of a difference between Yaakov and Esav. Both were studying the Torah, and observed its commandments from "A to Z."

**However**, when they turned 13, everything changed.

spiritually growing. This is vital information for every Jew.<sup>5</sup>

**Yaakov** and Esav, growing up in a household where constant self-improvement never ceased for a moment, did not rest either. They continually ascended to new levels, and while feeling satisfaction and joy when the level was attained, they encountered battle once again each time anew...

**Esav**, sat one day in the field, and thought, "How long can this go on? No matter where I go or what I do, it's a constant struggle! When will I get to live? I'm tired already of all the spiritual struggles and setbacks, enough! This is not for me!"<sup>6</sup>

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### ~*Wellsprings of Wisdom*~

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**5. In** the words of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (Likkutei Moharan, Part I, Torah 25:5):

"**Concerning** this, many pious Jews make a mistake. They suddenly feel as though they have fallen from the service of G-d. In truth, this is not a falling at all.

**It** is just that because they need to ascend from one level to another, the 'shells' (kliptot), which are desires, confusions,

imaginations, and thoughts, awaken and strengthen themselves anew. Therefore, one needs to prevail each time, returning and subduing and breaking the 'shells' and so on, on each level and level anew.

But in truth, it is not a fall at all!"

**6. Esau** had a great and broad mind, yet he failed to use it to illuminate his heart! Esau, in his own self-estimation, was a

**Parshat Toldot - The Difference Between Yaakov and Esav**

decent and proper man, until his insatiable desire was awakened, and he fell prey to it.

**And** very much like Esau, one who does not work on purifying themselves may end up like the 'miser' from Lomzha in the story of the Maggid of Jerusalem,

Rabbi Schwadron ('Lehagid' p. 198):

**In** Lomzha lived a Jew whose reputation as a 'miser' went before him. This 'miser' was greatly wealthy by so miserly that he went with his clothing torn, and he dressed like the poor men of town.

**Exceptional** tales about him were known in the city:

**When** his daughter reached marriageable age, he searched for a 'great Torah scholar' for her. He scoured the benches of the yeshiva with the intention of finding the desired groom. In one of his searches, he found the coveted match, a true Torah scholar.

**In** one of his efforts, he shared the true intentions he had, why he was insistent that the groom he sought be a true Torah scholar: 'usually yeshiva students are poor, and if he will be both poor and a devout Torah scholar, I will be rewarded doubly - I will undoubtedly not need to spend much, not before the engagement and not afterward in the day to day.'

**Finally**, he found his match to his heart's desire. The wedding took place with great modesty, like most weddings in those times when people made do with very little, all the more so at the wedding of the daughter of the infamous 'miser'.

**Alas**, a few years later, the scholarly bridegroom, fell seriously ill, and the doctors in Lomzha couldn't find a cure. They decided to advise him to go to Vienna, where there was a possibility of a surgical procedure that could save his life. The surgery involved a substantial amount of money, and of course, the young man did not have the required sum.

**The** bridegroom dared not ask his wealthy father-in-law for the money, so some members of the community decided to make every effort and attempt to convince 'miser' to participate in the expenses. He categorically refused in any way.

**When** some time passed with no progress, the great Rabbi Meir Simcha, the 'Or Sameach,' then the rabbi of Lomzha, also got involved, 'For your daughter's sake, it's your son-in-law!' 'He is seriously ill and on the brink of death, help him!' But it was all to no avail.

**In** the end, the young scholar passed away. He departed this world suffering from severe pain.

**Many** mourners participated in the funeral, and the funeral became a topic of conversation in Lomzha for a long time, not only because of the magnitude of the calamity but because of something else:

**The** miserly father-in-law followed the hearse with the coffin, and cried his heart out in sorrow.

**From** his money he would not part by all means, but from his scholarly son-in-law too he had a very difficult time parting...

**Parshat Toldot - The Fear of Failing**

**Yaakov**, on the other hand, knew the "secret of the bicycle." Yes, spiritual struggles along the way may be hard, but they're an indication that I'm progressing! I'm getting better! I'm getting closer to the Creator!

**This** is referred to in the verse: "And the boys grew

older, and Esav was a cunning hunter, a man of the field, but Yaakov was a devout man, dwelling in tents (Genesis 25:27)."

**And** so, in this manner fifty years passed...

**Before** we continue, let's enhance our understanding.

**The Fear of Failing**

**We** don't know why Esav became despondent, why he

didn't turn to his parents for help.<sup>7</sup>

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

**Another** story that circulated in town about the 'miser':

**When** his wife died, after they laid her on the ground and lit candles around her as usual, the family members gathered around the deceased. Suddenly, her son bent down and felt under her repeatedly...

**Those** present were amazed and asked in wonder, 'What's this now? What's the matter with you?' He replied, 'my coat button fell off, and I suspect it's in here somewhere.' They were even more surprised, 'Is now the time to search for a button, even from under your own deceased mother?' to which he replied, 'What's the matter? After all, the button is worth a dime.' His mother's honor was not even worth a dime...

**Woe** to the students of the wicked Esau...

**7. 'Yeush'** means to surrender, as Rabbi Kluger writes (in Yichud Hahitbodedut, p. 231):

**Some** circumstances in life bring a person to 'submit' to the destiny that oversees them, not out of agreement, but due to a perceived lack of choice. As though it is not within their power to change the situation. Thus become desensitized and devoid of vitality.

**One** believes, as do all Jews who are a nation of believers, without doubting the ways of divine providence. He knows full well that everything is under divine supervision, every detail, and it is all for the good. He understands that everything is arranged from the outset, foreseen

Parshat Toldot - The Fear of Failing

**But** on our part, we must know to not fall into the trap of despair, and to remember as mentioned earlier, that the G-d in His infinite wisdom decreed that when ascending to each new level, one must go through a period of difficulties, each unique to the individual. And that aside from the actual difficulty itself, there is another significant challenge to overcome: the fear of failing.

**Through** many years of Torah study, prayer, and good deeds, a person merits having a Divine light descend upon them during a difficulty. This light purifies them to the point where their body itself rejects anything evil. Their body no longer desires

prohibited things; it recoils from the pursuit of wealth, the desire for respect, and other worldly desires.

**However**, before one reaches such a level, the battle can be very hard. Reason and common sense evaporate in real time, and a person may feel an emptiness inside, and have nothing to grasp on to.

**When** a Jew is in the middle of a difficulty, sometimes all their knowledge and wisdom vanish, and they are left only with their body against the difficulty.

**This** internal conflict creates a dilemma: on one hand, the evil inclination with its enticements, desires, and negative energy, on the other hand, the Divine soul beg

— *Wellsprings of Wisdom* —

accurately in the exact place which events will occur. Yet, despite all this, one may find it challenging, and yearn for the change to come soon, and for everything to disappear as if it never happened. What can they do, when the world is governed by the Creator who acts upon His creations as He sees fit.

**They** neither weep nor rejoice. They refrain from pondering the depth of the matter too profoundly, as it appears as though they

stand on the brink of an abyss. They may submit to this reality, without exerting a strong will to alter it, not even through prayer. One goes about his day as required, lives his life monotonously in such a way, with deep-seated bitterness and hidden unrest, which sometimes bursts forth in impatience, outbursts toward others, or G-d forbid, anger. One may become tired of life, weighed down by the world, and may submit their soul to the suffering. This is the sorry state of the soul called 'Yeushh!...'

## Parshat Toldot - This is the Way

the person - stop ! You are falling into a pit from which you may not emerge. Tomorrow could be too late ! How can you transgress the will of the Creator ? !

**If** a person can conquer the evil inclination and withstand the trial, they are truly fortunate.

**However**, if they falter, a new feeling arises: fear. Fear that the Al-mighty no longer loves them, fear that

they have lost all their spiritual heights which they achieved with so much effort over the years, fear that their mind is now corrupted, and that they will perceive everything in a distorted way.

**This** fear is paralyzing, but anyone seeking to reach spiritual heights must know they are obligated to move forward and not pay heed to this fear.

## This is the Way

**Rabbi** Nachman of Breslov writes:

**“When** a person truly begins to serve the Creator, initially, they perceive distance. It seems as if they are being pushed away, and not allowed to enter the gates of the divine service. But what appears as distancing is actually an approach.

**One** must make a great effort not to despair when they see so much time has passed while trying to serve the Creator, and the gates of holiness remain closed to them. They see themselves full of physical desires and impure thoughts. Every step they take

toward holiness seems like they are hitting an insurmountable barrier.

**They** feel that the Al-mighty does not pay attention to them and that their service is still far from acceptable. One must make every effort not to pay any attention to all this. For all this apparent distance is, in reality, a part of the process to get closer, as mentioned earlier.

**All** of the righteous people pass through this path, as we heard from them personally. And if they didn't continuously strive to strengthen themselves, and if they would have payed heed to all these distractions, they would have

Parshat Toldot - This is the Way

stayed in the same place, not reaching the heights they achieved.

**Dear** brothers, the rule is this: one must hold on to the service of the Creator with all their might, not paying attention to all the obstacles. And if you feel very far from the Creator and think you are sinning at every moment, know that when a person is mired in materiality, every small action they take for the sake of the Creator holds immense value and is precious to the Al-mighty. Every little step advances them thousands of kilometers in the spiritual worlds. Realizing this, you should be filled with joy, sadness causes significant harm.

**Know** that when a person wants to start serving the Creator,

sadness is a great sin because sorrow belongs to the Sitra Achra (the Other Side), as is written in the Zohar. The Al-mighty despises sadness.

**You** must be very tenacious in the service of the Creator and not leave the ground you've already gained. Even if you feel very far, it's essential to hold on with all your strength, never letting go, no matter what. Even if you are repeatedly diverted from serving the Creator, you must do your best in what is within your power, never allowing your fall to be permanent, G-d forbid. Every person is obligated to go through these falls and confusions before entering the gates of holiness, as all the true righteous people did.<sup>8</sup>

—*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*—

**8. In** the talk delivered by Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg, ('Niflaot' Vayera 5782), he said the following:

**Every** Jew, upon deep introspection, knows that there are great, unrestricted unholy powers within them. In a person who is not fully rectified, these inner powers are like a monster dwelling within the depths of their subconscious, in their sub-awareness. Woe unto them if this

monster were to be revealed. Thus, one continually needs a spiritual strength of courage to subdue these latent powers, as the adage: "Who is strong? One who conquers their evil inclination". These latent powers are known as the evil inclination.

**In** an instant, the destructive power can break forth like a nuclear bomb, shattering one's personal and collective world. Each individual, by their nature, fears the hidden

## Prophecy – Unity of Body and Soul

**Now**, let's return to the weekly portion.

**When** Yitzchak was nearly 123 years old, he received a new, very high level of soul. After receiving this new level, he wished to draw down a blessing into our world, such that it would endure for many generations, began to prepare for this.

**As** Rabbi Abraham, the son of Maimonides, writes:<sup>9</sup>

**"Know** that a person's soul connects them with the Creator, as it is said, 'The candle of the L-rd is the soul of man.' There

is no doubt that the soul receives prophecy. There is also no doubt that a person's soul, even that of a prophet, is connected with their body at all times. When the body is weak, so is the soul. When the body is ill, the soul is also affected. If the body is in low spirits, the soul is as well, and it rejoices again when the body is joyful.

**Therefore**, it cannot be that a sick person will experience prophecy, or if they are greatly agitated or sad, until the hindrance is removed and the soul returns to a state of joy.

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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monster within them, fearing it might suddenly erupt. Not everyone is consciously aware of this fear, but it resides within everyone. To prevent the monster from breaking out, one must hold oneself back, restrain oneself, and maintain control.

**For** this reason, the Holy One, blessed be He, granted us the Torah and commandments. Through them, He has provided us with the strength to channel all of this latent power into the vessels of Torah, and in

unique Torah insights that each can reveal.

**As** it is written in the Tanya (Epistle of Holiness, Section 26): "Every Jew can reveal the secrets of wisdom and innovate in all areas of Torah, whether in the legal, haggadic, or hidden areas, each according to the level of the source of their soul. Each person is obligated to complete their soul by elevating all the sparks that have fallen into their portion."

**9.** HaMaspik L'Ovdei Hashem (chap. on Prishut)

**Parshat Toldot - The Secret of Success – Rising Upward and Returning**

**When** Yitzchak desired to draw down a prophetic blessing into this world, he felt that his strength had already left him, as it is written: 'And it came to pass when Yitzchak became old and his eyes had dimmed.' Just as his vision had weakened, so too, his other senses had diminished. Since all the senses are rooted in the heart, upon which the soul depends, because of his bodily weakness, Yitzchak realized that his soul was no longer in a state of joy as it had been before.

**He** realized that in order to

**The Secret of Success – Rising Upward and Returning**

**The** prophet Ezekiel beheld the "Chariot of the Al-mighty" in his prophetic vision. When he describes the the myriads of angels (the "Chayot"), he phrases it thus: "The 'Chayot' rose upward and returned as the flash of lightning (Ezekiel 1:14)."

**Rashi** explains<sup>10</sup> that the 'Chayot' angels, raise their head

bring down the descent of the prophecy of blessing, the soul and body had to reunite..."

**So**, Yitzchak called Esav and said to him: "Tonight, I will turn 123 years old. I want to give you a blessing. Bring me the kind of food that suits my body, and then, after eating, my soul will reunite with my body, and I will be able to receive the gift of prophecy and bless you properly."

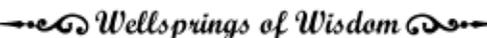
**Esav** went to prepare a meal.

**Before** we continue, a brief digression...

from above the firmament above them, and immediately as lighting lower their heads out of the great awe of the divine presence.

**The** Baal Shem Tov sees in this verse a hint regarding a person's spiritual work:

"**The** 'Chayot' rose upward and returned" —the soul of a person, since it has been hewn



**Parshat Toldot - The Secret of Success – Rising Upward and Returning**

from its holy source in G-d, longs to return. However, if it would return to its source, the soul would depart, leaving the body lifeless. Therefore, the Al-mighty created man in a way that forces him to engage in material things such as eating, drinking, and engaging in commerce, things that attach the soul to this world, preventing it from departing. When a person engages in these activities according to the framework of the "Shulchan Aruch" (the Jewish Code of Law), the soul returns to the body. This is called "back."

**When** a person lives this way, giving attention to both the soul and the body, they are worthy of receiving the Torah. This is hinted to in the numerical equivalence of the words "upward and returned," which is equal to the word "Torah."

**Let's** clarify this a bit further:

**The** routines and daily cares of life lead to a kind of fatigue. This fatigue usually does not dissipate on its own, the longer time passes, the duller one's sensations become, and the more their energies weaken.

**The** Creator, blessed be His name, created man with five senses. If a person uses these senses properly in accordance with the Shulchan Aruch, their strength is renewed. Everyone has their own needs. Some people, slightly weaker in spirit, need to eat something delicious or wear beautiful clothing to support their soul and feel well. If a person does these actions to strengthen the soul, to have the strength to continue to serve the Creator, they are doing a deed pleasing to the L-rd.<sup>11</sup>

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

**11. Recognize** your level!

**Our** holy sages revealed to us that the purpose of the world's creation was for G-d to have a dwelling place among the lower worlds.

**If** so, it is clear that the essential thing is the "return", to sanctify the

body and the desires of the world, for through this, we make the world a fitting place for the revelation of the Divine Presence.

**While** this is the goal, every person must recognize their own level, one cannot 'skip' stages and levels.

**Parshat Toldot - The Righteous - A Burning Flame**

**For** example, on Shabbat when we are commanded to dress nicely, prepare delicious food, and enjoy the time with family and friends and so on, all within the confines of the Torah's commandment and spirit.

**Now**, let's return to our weekly portion.

**Yitzchak**, desiring to draw divine influence, needed to

eat in order to strengthen the connection between his soul with his body. He asked Esav to prepare a meal for him.

**Rivka**, by virtue of her holiness, understood what was said, even though the conversation was held in a closed room. Realizing that Esav was not worthy of the blessing, she called Yaakov and ordered him to disguise himself as Esav...

**The Righteous - A Burning Flame**

**Rivka** calls Yaakov, saying to him, "Father wishes to bless Esav! We can't let that happen! So instead of Esav, you will go!"

**Yaakov**, upon hearing his mother's request, is terrified: "Mother, the righteous are like a burning flame! What will happen if Father detects the

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**There** seems to be a contradiction in the words of our Sages who say (Yerushalmi Kiddushin 4:12) that a person is destined to give an account for not eating something that he could have eaten even though he chose not to, as stated in the verse "And whatever my eyes desired, I did not deny them" (Ecclesiastes 2:10).

**But** in Sifra (Parshat Kedoshim - Parsha 1), it says, "You shall be holy" (Leviticus 19:2), which means, separate from the world. The Talmud also says (Taanit 11),

"Anyone who fasts is called holy, as a Nazirite." Should one separate from physicality or not?

**The** answer is straightforward: it depends on the individual's level.

**A** person who is attached to the material and who takes on a vow of separation that is higher than their current level is considered a sinner.

**However**, one who is currently in the state of separation - that's what he must do!

deceit? Then I'll receive a curse instead of a blessing!"<sup>12</sup>

**However**, as Jewish mother do, Rivka persuades him, and Yaakov, though fearful, brings her two kid goats to prepare for his father.<sup>13</sup>

**After** preparing the meal, Rivka sends Yaakov to Yitzchak. Upon entering, Yaakov addresses

his father politely, "Dear father, I have brought you food; please partake and bless me."

**Yitzchak** seems puzzled: "And Yitzchak said to his son, 'How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?' He answered, 'Because the L-rd your G-d granted me success.'" (Genesis 27:20).

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

**12. About** the Maggid of Zlatshov (Torat HaMaggid of Zlatshov, p. 30), it is told:

**After** his wedding, the holy Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlatshov settled in the Beit Midrash and studied Torah, Kabbalah, and Chassidut for about two hours. In that Beit Midrash, there were several prominent scholars who didn't favor Rabbi Yechiel Michel. They would mock and ridicule him at every opportunity.

**Once** they decided to make a mockery of him. They collected some money among themselves and gathered two gold coins. One of them took the money and came to Rabbi Yechiel Michel, saying, "Rabbi, please, take this coin from me as a 'pidyon', as my wife is very ill."

**Rabbi** Yechiel Michel took the coin in his hand, held it, and tossed it from hand to hand, from right to left, and from left to right. Meanwhile, the man stood waiting to hear a blessing, trying not to

laugh. Then Rabbi Yechiel Michel, with a pained voice, lifted his piercing eyes and said, "I cannot help you!"

**The** man returned to his friends and shared with them what had transpired. They burst into a raucous laughter, rolling on the ground with ridicule and mockery at the 'miracle worker' who couldn't even give a simple blessing to his wife who was completely healthy!

**As** they continued to laugh, the son of the man rushed to the Beit Midrash and told his father, "Father, come quickly, Mother fainted!" When the man reached his home, he found that his wife had already passed away.

**Oh**, the importance of respecting the sages!

**13.** As in Bereshit Rabbah (65:15) 'Yitzchak appeared before his mother bowed, under duress and in tears.'

**Parshat Toldot - The Great Fear of Yitzchak**

**Something** doesn't seem right to Yitzchak, as the manner of speech didn't suit Esav. He requests, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son." The Midrash describes how frightened Yaakov became during this moment, trembling with fear to

the point that the Al-mighty had to send two angels to support him.

**Yitzchak** finished the meal and proceeded to bless Yaakov with great and powerful blessings. No sooner had Yaakov exited, and Esav arrived...

**The Great Fear of Yitzchak**

**Esav**, standing before his father, said with his usual disrespectful tone, "Father, get up and eat!"

**Yitzchak**, however, was astonished and asks, "Who are you?" Esav replies, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esav."

"**And** Yitzchak trembled very exceedingly.

**The** Midrash<sup>14</sup> explains that Yitzchak's fear at this moment was greater than the fear he experienced when he was bound on the altar. What was this great fear to the extent that his soul left his body?<sup>15</sup>

**In** Pesikta De-Rav Kahana<sup>16</sup> it says: "Rabbi Eleazar Ben Pedat said, from what did Yitzchak fear so greatly at that time? From the Day of Judgment.

**When** Yitzchak wanted to bless Esav, he did not know that he was utterly corrupt, for he had asked his father how to tithe salt and straw. Yitzchak thought that if his son was so scrupulous in non-obligatory matters, he would be even more so in obligatory matters. However, when the true nature of Esav was revealed to him, Yitzchak feared the Day of Judgment."

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

14. Bereshit Rabbah (67:2)

15. As Rabbi Margalioth writes (Dvar Yesharim, vol. I p. 82a), that his soul left his

body, only to be revived, similarly to when he was bound upon the Altar in the Akedah.

16. Vezot Haberacha (part 32)

**Parshat Toldot - How to Rise After Falling**

**The** entrance to purgatory was opened before him, and its fire was felt from afar. At that moment a spiritual weakness fell upon

Yitzchak, and he felt as though he lost every good virtue, and from the great pain of this experience, his soul temporarily departed.

**How to Rise After Falling**

**After** the incident with the blessings, Yitzchak lived for another 75 years. How did he manage to live all these years while Esav showed no sign of spiritual improvement?

**The** essence of the matter is that Yitzchak knew a great rule in the service of the Creator:

"**No** one can separate a Jew from his Creator!"

**A** Jew's soul is a part of the Al-mighty Himself, and it

transcends the entire universe. Even if an angel or a voice from heaven were to tell a Jew that he stands no chance, it would be a falsehood. A Jew can't ever sever the connection with their Creator.<sup>17</sup> Even after sinning, one remains connected to the Creator, just as before the sin. And if a Jew does not despair, and does not give up on himself, his life, or his destiny, he can reach the very highest of levels.

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

**17. On** this matter, Rabbi Aharon Dov Halperin, shared the following story ('VeRabim Heshiv MeAvon' vol I p. 146):

**The** Delta Terminal in Salt Lake City Airport was packed to capacity. The days leading up to the beginning of the 'New Year' and the holidays are not exactly suitable for those who haven't prepared in advance or are trying their luck with a "standby" seat. Despite this, I decided to take the risk. After all, I had nothing to

lose, and I preferred the crowded queue at the terminal, over waiting until the next day to fly to New York, although I knew that the chances of getting on the next flight were not particularly high.

**At** the last moment, seconds before the flight gate closed, when I was already convinced that I would have to wait until tomorrow to fly to New York, I heard my name announced over the intercom. "There is one seat available on the plane," the

Parshat Toldot - How to Rise After Falling

flight attendant told me as I approached the counter. "Hurry up before the doors close."

"**Good** evening, sir," he greeted me, to my surprise, in clear Hebrew when he sat next to me, even before I had fastened my seatbelt. "Good evening," I replied politely, wondering about the divine providence that had seated me on this crowded, long flight next to an Israeli neighbor.

"**Are** you, like me, coming from Los Angeles?" I asked. "No," my neighbor replied, "I'm from here, Salt Lake City." "Business?" I continued to inquire as any curious Israeli would. "Not at all," he answered with a somewhat strange smile. After a few seconds of hesitation, his smile widened, and he said, "I work with the Mormon Church."

**Yossi**, as he introduced himself to me, was one of the first souls that were targeted in the early 1970s by Mormon missionaries who infiltrated the Holy Land, especially Jerusalem. I knew that the Mormons uniquely target Jews to convert them, it's one of their primary missions, however, I did not know, nor had I suspected, how successful they had been.

**When** he tried, during his personal story, to pique my interest in their beliefs, I firmly told him that I was not willing to listen. "Are you afraid I'll influence you?" he asked me with a triumphant smile. "No," I told him, "I just don't want to defile my ears with such impurity."

"**Why** do you speak like that?" he questioned me, half in anger and half in embarrassment. "Why can't we discuss

and debate our beliefs and opinions as two cultured individuals?"

"**Because** idolatry," I answered, "even minor elements of it, according to Torah 'One should be killed to not transgress.' I am not willing for even a speck of this impurity to touch my ears."

I tried, on the other hand, to have a conversation with Yossi about his work, the ways in which he influences young Israelis. It was important for me to extract as much information from him as I could to share with Jewish activists and others who deal with this terrible epidemic of missionaries. However, Yossi was no fool, and did not fall into my trap. Apart from some not-meaningful bits of information that slipped from his lips during his chatter about his "successes," he was careful not to reveal secrets, locations, or methods of operation.

**My** attempts, during over four hours of the flight, to talk to his Jewish soul and try to awaken his "Jewish spark" were unsuccessful. The surprise came toward the end of the flight, however, from him: "Can I meet your Rebbe?" he asked.

**In** truth, I hesitated. On the one hand, how could I allow a Mormon missionary access to the sacred chamber of the Rebbe, and who knows what he might say there? On the other hand, what right do I have to prevent a Jew from going to the Rebbe, especially when it's possible that this is the only chance to influence him for the good?

**In** the end, my second thought prevailed. "On Sundays," I told him, "our Rebbe

## Parshat Toldot - How to Rise After Falling

distributes dollars for charity, and anyone can see him. I'm willing to take you there, but I'll warn you about one thing: you dare not to open your mouth with your nonsense in front of the Rebbe, and certainly not to engage in arguments. Approach, receive a dollar and a blessing, and that's it."

**On** Sunday, at one o'clock in the afternoon, we met as agreed at the subway station of "Kingston Avenue." We immediately joined the place I had secured well in advance in the long line to see the Rebbe.

"I am a Mormon," Yossi announced immediately when he approached the Rebbe. I was standing behind him, and wanted to bury myself in shame and embarrassment for having brought him.

"**You** are a Jew," the Rebbe immediately cut him off and gave him another dollar.

"**But**," Yossi continued, but before he could utter another word, the Rebbe interrupted him again, gave him another dollar, and said, "Success in a Jewish life and in influencing your environment."

"**Respected** Rebbe," Yossi tried again, but the Rebbe's secretary with firm determination and the help of one of the boys in the area, completely removed him out of the field of view. I found myself standing in front of the Rebbe, receiving a dollar for "blessing and success," another dollar "for Kfar Chabad," and... and unusually, a third dollar for "good tidings."

**When** I went out to the street, and found him waiting for me at the entrance, I rebuked the Jewish 'Mormon' in anger. "You promised me that you wouldn't

open your mouth with your nonsense in front of the Rebbe," I scolded him in anger. To which he replied to me with a sneering smile, "I thought your Rebbe would have more patience."

"**If** he didn't have patience for an apostate like you," I replied, still boiling, "you wouldn't have received a blessing. The Rebbe would've turned you, fittingly, into a heap of bones. Now that you have received a blessing, at the very least, it is incumbent on you to fulfill what the Rebbe told you: 'Success in a Jewish life.'"

"I actually prefer," he answered with a provocative smile, "to fulfill the second part of the blessing - 'influencing my environment.' I will fulfill that and more."

"**I'm** sure," I told him, "that the Rebbe's blessing will be fully realized. But as a Jew who has a choice, you must first cleanse yourself of this impurity."

"**It's** a waste of time to talk," he replied with a teasing smile. "In any case, I thank you for the visit."

"**Leave** me at least an address or a phone number," I tried my luck at the last moment. "You won't get any address, phone number, or anything out of me that would allow your people to follow me."

**Since** then, I have never met "Yossi" again, and he has not established any contact with me.

**However**, at a family event that I attended several years later, it was related to me by coincidence that in Los Angeles, there is an Israeli who was formerly active in the

Parshat Toldot - How to Rise After Falling

**So** even when Yitzchak saw that the purgatory had opened up under his feet, he did not break down, and did not despair. He knew that it is impossible to sever a Jew's soul from its source in G-d Al-mighty Himself. He continued to serve the Al-mighty, just as before, and in an even greater measure, and received all the blessings of this world and of the world to come.

**On** a practical note, it's not as simple as it sounds on paper, but the key is to persevere. Similar to trees, who sometimes have a period of fall and

stagnation, yet they know that the period of bloom and blossom is around the corner.

**Our** sages have said: "The Al-mighty said: 'They may abandon Me, but so long as they keep My Torah, its light will eventually return them to the good path.'"

**So**, even if a person feels that they are in a spiritual slump, they should strive to set aside a regular time for Torah study or attending Torah classes, and the Torah, and only in it, is the power to put a person back on their feet.

**Shabbat Shalom!**



*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

Mormon Church and is now working with all his might, very successfully, against the Mormon missionaries who try to recruit young Jews and Israelis in Los Angeles.

"**When** he once entered our yeshiva for evening prayers," one fellow told me, "he told us that he had met with the Lubavitcher

Rebbe and received a dollar. From that day onward, the holy and penetrating eyes of the Rebbe did not give him any rest, day and night, until he completely abandoned idolatry and Mormonism, repented fully, and dedicated all his time to saving young Jews from falling into a similar trap."

### Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. Human beings are the unique creation formed from two opposing elements: materiality and spirituality. Our task is to continually ascend, subordinating as much of the material to the spiritual as possible.
2. When a person attempts to rise to a new spiritual level, the forces of evil do their utmost to hinder them. Knowing this, one should not despair but continue their work until victory, which will inevitably come.
3. The period of this struggle is very challenging. A person may feel inner emptiness, with nothing to hold onto. If they will nonetheless endure these trials, they will find happiness and fulfillment. However, if they fail, a new feeling emerges - fear. It's a fear that the Al-mighty may no longer love them, a fear of losing all the spiritual levels they worked so hard to attain.
4. However, it's crucial not to dwell on this fear. One should know that no matter how distant they feel from the Creator; it is not really the case. Every minimal action has immense weight in the eyes of the Creator.
5. The soul of a Jew, as part of the Creator, longs to return to its source. This is why the Al-mighty has us engage in physical activities such as eating, drinking, etc., to draw the soul back downward.
6. The routine of life can wear down and dull a person's soul, numbing their vitality and feelings. Yet, when a person uses their senses according to the 'Shulchan Aruch' (the Jewish code of law), they enliven those senses.
7. Every individual has unique needs, and they must know themselves well to properly care for their soul and body. By tending to the body, with the intention of having the strength to serve the Creator, a person fulfills a great and important commandment.



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## 5<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, 5784



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:18 pm	5:19 pm	5:48 pm
Miami	5:13 pm	6:07 pm	6:43 pm
Los Angeles	4:31 pm	5:28 pm	6:00 pm
Montreal	4:04 pm	5:09 pm	5:33 pm
Toronto	4:32 pm	5:36 pm	6:02 pm
London	3:51 pm	5:02 pm	5:20 pm
Jerusalem	4:24 pm	5:13 pm	5:47 pm
Tel Aviv	4:20 pm	5:09 pm	5:42 pm
Haifa	4:17 pm	5:07 pm	5:39 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:21 pm	5:11 pm	5:44 pm

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HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l*

*We cannot complain, we have nothing to complain about. What we are deserving of, no one can take from us. As Ben Azai proclaimed 'In your name you will be called, in your proper place you will be seated, and will be given what belongs to you; no one receives that which belongs to their friend and one kingdom doesn't usurp from another.*

*There's no reason to be frustrated, in our generation one has everything they need at their doorstep, one only needs to invest effort to be happy. The abundance of goodness from above needs to meet a smile of the person, otherwise the goodness moves elsewhere.*



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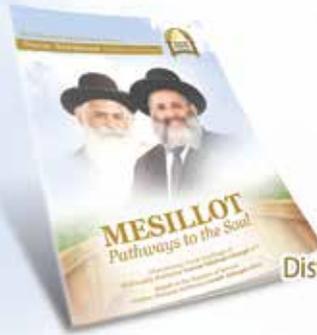
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