

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 183

**Lech Lecha** | Tithing - Defends, Enriches, and Rectifies



# 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**

פרשת לך לך | אנגלית

# ...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A New Teacher in the Talmud Torah . . . . .	1
Commonalities of the Forefathers . . . . .	2
Avraham's Earlier Years . . . . .	4
Avraham Defeats the Four Kings . . . . .	6
Avraham - The First to Tithe . . . . .	8
Tithe, And You Will Be Wealthy . . . . .	9
Tithing the Produce of the Earth . . . . .	13
Yaakov's Vow To Tithe . . . . .	14
A Question That Created an Empty Space. . . . .	15
The Descent of The Tree of Knowledge . . . . .	16
The Blemish of Adam and Correction of Avraham . . . . .	18
Esau Has A Novel Idea For Rectification . . . . .	19
Esau's True Evil Intentions . . . . .	20
Esau's Marriages - The Alternative Plan . . . . .	21
Yaakov Tithes Doubly . . . . .	22
The Power of the Satan Increased . . . . .	24
Summary and Practical Conclusions . . . . .	25



**DONATE**

### Beit Hamidrash Hameir La'aretz

Publisher and Distributer of the Teachings of  
Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l

 500 Frank W Burr Blvd Suite 47  
Teaneck, NJ 07666

 [en@h-l.org.il](mailto:en@h-l.org.il)


 [www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en](http://www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en)

 HaKatzir 666, Netivot, Israel

 (954) 800-6526

 HameirLaaretsEN

 HameirLaaretsEN

 054-870-8737

Message Us to Join Our WhatsApp Groups

## **Parshat Lech Lecha**

### **A New Teacher in the Talmud Torah**

The principal of the Talmud Torah entered the sixth grade classroom; the students rose in his honor. After they sat down, the principal began:

"Surely your teacher has already told you that, due to personal reasons, he is leaving the teaching profession, and that today is his last day with you."

"And as you know," the principal continued, "we are now in the midst of the school year, and naturally, it's quite difficult at this time to find a teacher."

However, with Divine assistance, we have found a highly qualified and special teacher. And, G-d willing, he will come to your class tomorrow."

The principal finished his words and left the classroom.

The students looked at each other with curiosity: "A highly

qualified teacher? What could that mean?"

The day passed quickly, and the next morning they entered the classroom with an expression of curiosity spread across their faces.

In the front of the classroom, in a front-facing chair, sat a young teacher with a radiant face, whose penetrating eyes exuded wisdom and understanding.

"As you know," the new teacher began, "the Jewish people have three patriarchs: Avraham, Isaac, and Yaakov."

Our three patriarchs devotedly served the Blessed Creator, each according to their qualities and innate attributes.

Avraham our forefather served his Creator with the emotion of love, as it is written: 'Avraham, who loved Me' (Isaiah 41:8).

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Commonalities of the Forefathers**

Isaac our forefather served his Creator with the emotion of fear and awe, as it is written: 'and The Fear of Isaac' (Bereshit 31:42).

And Yaakov our forefather embodied the attribute of mercy, as expressed by the verse: 'And he lifted his voice and wept' (Bereshit 29:11).<sup>1</sup>

Yet, despite the many differences between them," the teacher continued, "we find in the Book of Bereshit a general form of divine service that was common to all of them. Can any of you tell me what divine service I'm referring to?"

For a few long moments, the question hovered in the air of the classroom.

**Commonalities of the Forefathers**

A hesitant hand was raised in the far end of the classroom.

"Let's hear what you have to say," said the teacher.

"I think," said the student, "that it is the service of prayer that was common to all the forefathers.

As it is stated in the Talmud (Berachot 26b):

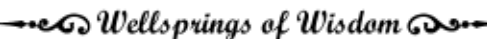
"Avraham established the morning prayer, as it is written: 'And Avraham rose early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the L-rd' (Bereshit 19:27), and 'standing' refers to prayer.

Isaac established the afternoon prayer, as it is written: 'And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening' (Bereshit 24:63), and 'meditation' refers to prayer.

Yaakov established the evening prayer, as it is written: 'And he encountered the place and spent the night there' (Bereshit 28:11), and 'encountering' refers to prayer.

And therefore, in every Amidah prayer, we mention them: 'G-d of Avraham, G-d of Isaac, and G-d of Yaakov'."

The teacher's face shone with joy: "Fortunate am I to have the



1. See further explanation of this matter in Chapter 45 of the Tanya.

Parshat Lech Lecha - Commonalities of the Forefathers

merit this year to teach such great Torah scholars as yourselves. The answer you gave is indeed beautiful and wonderful.

However, despite this, this service - the service of prayer - is hinted to, but not explicitly written in the Torah. I intend to divine service that is explicitly written in the Torah."

Again, a hand was raised. "Speak up and let us hear what you have to say," said the teacher.

"I think," said the student, "that it is serving G-d with joy.

As stated in the Talmud (Bava Batra 17a):

"The Rabbis taught, about three people the Torah uses the word 'all' (כָּל) - Avraham, Isaac, and Yaakov, and with this word, the Torah reveals to us that they merited to taste in this world a semblance of the World to Come.

Regarding Avraham it is written: 'And G-d blessed Avraham with all' (Bereshit 24:1).

Regarding Isaac it is written: 'And I have eaten from all before you came' (Bereshit 27:33).

And regarding Yaakov it is stated: 'Because G-d has dealt graciously with me, and because I have all' (Bereshit 33:11)."

The Ben Yehoyada explains in this passage, that the Holy One, blessed be He, allowed the patriarchs to feel and experience while still in this world - great and immense joy in the service of the Creator, similar to the joy felt in the World to Come."

The teacher called out, flushed with admiration: "What erudition, that is just terrific."

Again, a hand was raised. "Let's hear what you have to say," said the teacher.

Another student cleared his throat and said, "I wanted to add: My father once told me, in the name of the Ben Ish Chai,<sup>2</sup> if we add up all the years that the patriarchs lived, we find they lived

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Avraham's Earlier Years**

a total of 502 years; Avraham lived 175, Isaac lived 180, and Yaakov lived 147, totaling 502.

Similarly, the word 'meat' (בשר) is also numerically equivalent to 502.

When one eats meat, they should have the intention that in the merit of the refined lives of the patriarchs, may G-d help us to elevate the divine sparks of the meat."

The teacher raised his hand and said: "You are all wise and intelligent, and the things you say are wonderful, but I was thinking of something else entirely, and we shall now begin today's lesson."

The students sat intrigued as the new teacher began to weave the following tapestry of ideas.

**Avraham's Earlier Years**

"Avraham our forefather was 55 years old, with a rich past of unceasing service to G-d, devoting his entire soul and being to His service, and it was during this year that he first entered the Land of Israel,<sup>3</sup> where he continued further his devoted divine service.

Three years later, when Avraham was 58 years old, Noach died.<sup>4</sup>

Soon thereafter, when Avraham had reached the age of sixty, the regional council of Sodom rebelled against Chedorlaomer, king of Elam.<sup>5</sup>

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

3. As brought Sefer HaYashar, Noach.

4. Ibn Ezra, Bereshit 6:9.

5. More specifically: Kedorlaomer, king of Elam, ruled with a strong fist over all five cities of the plain of the Jordan. These five kings, namely: Shinab, king of Admah, Shemeber, king of Zeboim, Bera, king of Sodom, Birsha, king of

Gomorrah, and Bela, king of Zoar, were required to pay him a large tribute every year.

One day, they had enough, and together they declared: "We no longer recognize Kedorlaomer's authority, from today onward, he will not receive a single penny from us."

Parshat Lech Lecha - Avraham's Earlier Years

The years continued to pass, and when Avraham was seventy<sup>6</sup> - in the fifteenth year of his stay in the Land of Israel - the wondrous event of the 'Covenant of the Parts' occurred:<sup>7</sup> The sun began to set in the west, and Avraham our forefather, the greatest among giants, merited to experience the 'deep sleep of prophecy,' that coveted and wondrous state where the physical body ceases momentarily to be a barrier between man and divine visions.

In that awe-inspiring vision, they showed Avraham our forefather everything that the people of Israel would endure by the nations of the world - all the thousands of years of persecutions, cruelty, and wickedness.

The Torah describes the onset of this vision with the

words: 'And behold, a dread, a great darkness fell upon him' (Bereshit 15:12).

In this verse all four exiles are hinted to, as written in the Midrash:<sup>8</sup>

'Dread' - refers to the Babylonian exile, 'Darkness' - refers to the Median exile, 'Great' - refers to the Greek exile, and 'Fell upon him' - refers to the Edomite exile.

The Covenant of the Parts ended, and Avraham, our forefather returned to Charan. Avraham was physically in Charan, but his soul and spirit remained in the Land of Israel.

His heart burned with intense longing and yearning to return and dwell again in the Land of Israel, the place about which it is said: 'The eyes of the L-rd your G-d are always upon it, from the

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

6. Tosafot, Shabbat 10b. They add that after the Covenant of the Parts, Avraham returned to Charan, where he stayed for five years, and at the age of seventy-five, he left Charan again for the Land of Israel.

7. It is implied by Tosafot (ibid.) that the Covenant of the Parts took place in the Land

of Israel. However, in the end of the Baraita of the 32 Attributes, it is implied that the Covenant of the Parts took place in Charan: "Rabbi Yossi said, the Covenant of the Parts was five years prior to Avraham's departure from Charan, although it was recorded later."

8. Bereishit Rabbah (44:17).

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Avraham Defeats the Four Kings**

beginning of the year to the end of the year' (Devarim 11:12).

With the yearning of his soul, he cried to G-d: 'Oh that I had wings like a dove; I would fly away and dwell' (Psalms 55:7).<sup>9</sup>

During this time that Avraham was in Charan, something interesting happened - his stature and status was greatly strengthened, and he was treated and revered as a king.

**Avraham Defeats the Four Kings**

"The five years of exile in Charan had ended, and when Avraham our forefather was 75, he was commanded: 'Go forth from your land, and from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you' (Bereshit 12:1).

Avraham arose and took with him 'Sarai his wife, and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the souls that they had amassed in Charan' (ibid., verse 5), and set out on the journey, eventually arriving in the Land of Israel.

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

**9.** To quote the Shelah HaKadosh (Otiot, 'Kedusha', 23):

"We find in the Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah, 39:8) that the Holy One, blessed be He, told our forefather Avraham to go to the Land of Israel for the first time, to behold it, and then to return.

After he returned, he was not given permission to go back to the Land of Israel for five years, and during these years, he longed to return and recited the verse: "Oh that I had wings like a dove; I would fly away and find rest; surely, I would wander far away, and dwell in the wilderness" (Tehillim 55:7-8) - It is preferable to rest in the

wilderness of the Land of Israel than to lodge in palaces outside it, and he kept on yearning.

Once he was ultimately permitted to return, the verse states: "And Avram went as G-d had spoken to him" (Bereishit 12:4).

Although prior to his coming to the land, he had no yearning, after he came there the first time and saw through prophetic vision the glorious holiness of the land, he yearned for it deeply.

From him, we learn for future generations, that we too, his descendants, should yearn for the holy land as he did, although its inhabitants endure afflictions."

Parshat Lech Lecha - Avraham Defeats the Four Kings

At that time, a severe famine prevailed in the Land of Israel, and Avraham together with his wife Sarah headed southward to Egypt, and after subduing the impure forces of Pharaoh,<sup>10</sup> he promptly returned to the Land of Israel.

Upon reaching the border of the land, Avraham and Lot shook hands, and parted ways. Avraham settled in the plains of Mamre, in Hebron, and Lot settled in Sodom.

"Meanwhile, in distant Elam, King Chedorlaomer paced in his palace, his face glowing like a ball of fire. He kept on hollering to himself, 'They have not paid taxes for thirteen years!'

Chedorlaomer sat at his round table and wrote letters to his allies (Nimrod king of Shinar, Tidal king of Goim, Arioch king of Ellasar): 'Please come and assist me in striking the cities of

Sodom and its inhabitants, for they have transgressed against me these thirteen years.'

From both ends of the Valley of Siddim, the camps stood - the four kings (led by Chedorlaomer) against the five kings (of the plain), and when the signal was given, war broke out in full force.

The war was hard and cruel, but in the end, the four kings defeated the five and took captive the inhabitants and all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, including Lot and his possessions.

Avraham heard that Lot, his brother Haran's son, had been taken captive, and a sense of responsibility arose in his heart; Avraham mobilized all of his disciples and went out to war.

Avraham was well aware that he was merely an instrument in the hand of G-d to reveal His

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

10. As the Midrash relates (Vayikra Rabbah, 32:5):

Rabbi Huna, in the name of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba, said: "Sarah our matriarch descended to Egypt and safeguarded herself from

immorality, and in her merit, all women were safeguarded. Yosef went down to Egypt and safeguarded himself from immorality, and in his merit, the Jewish people were safeguarded."

will in the world, and he nullified himself entirely before the Creator. In turn, G-d treated him in the same measure and fulfilled Avraham's will to save Lot.

G-d nullified all the strength and ability of the armies of the four kings, and Avraham won the war, leaving many slain on the battlefield.

### **Avraham - The First to Tithe**

"Avraham achieved his goal; he managed to return Lot with all his possessions, and additionally, he returned all the inhabitants and possessions of the five cities of the plain of the Jordan.

He journeyed back to the King's Valley' (Bereshit 14:17), and when he arrived there, two kings were already waiting for

him, the first was the king of Sodom, and the second was Melchizedek, king of Salem, who our sages identify Shem, the son of Noach.<sup>11</sup>

While the king of Sodom received Avraham empty-handed (per the Sodomite tradition), Shem, the son of Noach, honored Avraham with bread and wine

---

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

---

**11.** Targum Yonatan, Bereshit 14:18.

In this connection we share the following tale:

In approximately the year 5630 (1870), Rabbi Shem Klingberg was born to his father, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai. On the day of the bris, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai approached his grandfather, Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Komarno, and asked him, "What name should I give to the baby?"

Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac recounted: "This past Rosh Hashanah was turbulent; discussions about the fate of the Jewish people this year were held in the

heavens, some prosecuting and yet others defending.

Suddenly, Shem, the son of Noach, appeared and began to passionately defend the Jewish people. His words were accepted, and the Jewish people were inscribed and sealed for a good year of salvation and mercy. I therefore promised him that the first child born in my family would be named after him, and thus, we should call him 'Shem'."

Little Shem grew up to be a towering figure, and he became one of the great Jewish giants of his generation, a luminary of Chassidut, who brightened the skies of Polish Jewry in its days of grandeur (Ohaley Shem, pages 7-9).

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Tithe, And You Will Be Wealthy**

and also blessed him, saying: 'Blessed be Abram to G-d the Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth' (ibid., verse 19).

Avraham turned to Shem and said: There is a mitzvah to consecrate a tithe of one's earnings, and since you are the dean of Yeshivat Shem and Eber, I want to give you a tithe of all the possessions, as the verse states: 'And he gave him a tenth of all' (ibid., verse 20).

In the words of the Midrash:<sup>12</sup>

**Tithe, And You Will Be Wealthy**

In a talk delivered by my revered father, Rabbi Yoram of blessed memory, he said the following about the topic of tithes:<sup>13</sup>

"In Parshat Re'eh it is stated: 'Beware lest you forsake the Levite all your days upon your land' (Devarim 12:19).

In this verse, the Torah commands us to gladden the

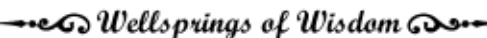
"Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha says: Avraham was the first to tithe in the world.

He took all of the tithes of the recovered possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and all of the tithes of Lot, his nephew, and gave them to Shem the son of Noach, as the verse states: "And he gave him a tenth of all."

"Before we continue further on this subject," the new teacher remarked, sensing that the audience was in need of an intermission, "we will digress for a moment."

Levites and regularly give them their rightful share of tithes, and also to bestow upon them at various times from the wealth that G-d has given us, so that they too can rejoice during the festival by eating meat, fish, and all kinds of delicacies.

This is because the tribe of Levi was chosen by G-d to serve in the Holy Temple, and they have



12. Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer, Chapter 27.

13. Imrei Noam, Re'eh - First Essay.

Parshat Lech Lecha - Tithe, And You Will Be Wealthy

no portion and inheritance in the land from which they can make a living like other people, and therefore, it is incumbent upon the public to support them generously.

This was true when the Holy Temple existed, and the Levites served in it.

But nowadays, when the Temple does not exist and the Levites earn their living through natural means and their own efforts like any other Jew, this commandment and obligation applies to Torah scholars who dedicate their lives to the study of the Torah, and though doing so earn a meager livelihood.

Their intention is to cause pleasure to G-d and to draw down from Above - grace, kindness, mercy, and protection upon all of Israel in all places of their dwelling, and they are the modern 'tribe of Levi' in our times.

As the Rambam writes:<sup>14</sup>

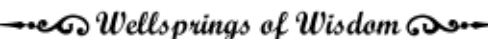
'Why did the tribe of Levi not receive a portion in the Land of

Israel and its spoils along with their brothers? Because they were set apart to serve G-d, to minister before Him, and to instruct His upright ways and righteous judgments to the masses.

Therefore, they were set apart from the ways of the world - they do not go out to war like the rest of Israel, nor do they inherit or acquire for themselves through their physical strength, but they are rather the army of the L-rd, and He, blessed be He, secures for them their needs.'

The Rambam there continues:

'Not only the tribe of Levi, but any individual from the inhabitants of the world whose spirit moves him and he understands with his knowledge to set himself apart to stand before G-d, to serve Him and minister to Him, to know the L-rd, and he walks upright as G-d made him, and he removes from his neck the yoke of the many calculations that people seek - he is sanctified as the holy of holies, and G-d shall be his portion and inheritance



Parshat Lech Lecha - Tithe, And You Will Be Wealthy

forevermore, and he shall receive in this world his needs sufficiently, as G-d granted to the priests and Levites. As David says: "The L-rd is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot" (Psalms 16:5).'

Therefore, when the Torah warns: 'Beware lest you forsake the Levite,' included in this warning is the prohibition to ignore the distress of the Torah scholars whose entire lives are sacred to G-d.

It is a sacred duty imposed upon each person to overcome the natural inclination towards stinginess, to open his heart and his hand and grant the Torah scholars an honorable portion from what G-d has blessed them.

The Baal HaTurim adds<sup>15</sup> that following the Torah's warning:

'Beware lest you forsake the Levite,' the Torah continues to say: 'When the L-rd your G-d shall broaden your borders', to hint that when a person bestows from the wealth that G-d has given them to the Torah scholars, not only will this not cause him a lack, but on the contrary, because of this, G-d will broaden his borders and grant him great wealth, as the verse states: 'A man's gift, expands room before him' (Proverbs 18:16).

This aligns with what our sages expound (Taanit 9a) on the verse 'You shall surely tithe all the seeds of your grains' (Devarim 14:22) - 'Tithe so that you will become wealthy.'

That is to say, giving a tithe to charity is a tried and tested remedy to merit great wealth.<sup>16</sup>

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

15. On Devarim 12:19-20.

16. Rabbi Yosef Ya'avetz, one of the exiles of Spain, explained that when the Creator bestows upon a person more livelihood than he requires, it is a way of informing a person that he has been chosen to be a conduit for transmitting the abundance to the poor and needy and to support Torah scholars.

The way a conduit works, if it is clean and flows outward, one continues to pour generously into it and fill it, but if it becomes clogged and does not flow, one stops filling it, and it becomes empty and dries up.

This is the meaning of 'Tithe so that you will become wealthy.'

(Ma'ayan HaShavua, Devarim, page 311).

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Tithe, And You Will Be Wealthy**

Additionally, we must remember that in our state of exile, we have nothing left but the Torah, and only it can protect us from the turbulent waters threatening to sweep us away. Through the merit of studying the Torah, the people of Israel merit unique protection from all the nations surrounding us.

As the Midrash says:<sup>17</sup>

'Rabbi Huna in the name of Rabbi Binyamin ben Levi shared a parable of a king who said to his son: "Go out and be involved in trade."

He responded: "Father, I fear the bandits on the way, and at sea, I fear the pirates."

What did his father do? He took a staff, hollowed it and placed a protective charm inside, and gave it to his son, saying: "Let this staff be in your hand, and you need not fear any creature."

So too, G-d said to Moses: Say to the Jewish people: "My

sons, engage in the Torah, and you need not fear any nation."

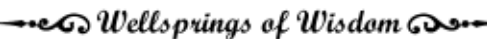
However, one who, for any reason, cannot study Torah all day, yet still wishes to be constantly connected to the Torah and its protection, must do as ruled in the Shulchan Aruch<sup>18</sup>:

'One who cannot learn because he does not know at all how to, or because of distractions he has, should support others who learn, and it will be considered as if he himself is learning.'

That is, by supporting true Torah scholars who engage in Torah day and night, it is considered as if he engaged in Torah throughout all the time that those whom he supports are engaged in it.

The Midrash equates between those who study Torah and those who support them:<sup>19</sup>

'In the future, G-d will make canopies for those who fulfilled the commandments and gave



17. Vayikra Rabbah, 25:1.

18. Yoreh De'ah, 246:1.

19. Vayikra Rabbah, 25:2.

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Tithing the Produce of the Earth**

charity, alongside the Torah scholars in the Garden of Eden.'

That is to say, adjacent to the canopies that G-d will make for the Torah scholars in the Garden of Eden as a reward for their

engagement in Torah, He will also make canopies for those Jews who supported Torah scholars, so that they be able to sit and engage in Torah with a happy and unburdened heart.

**Tithing the Produce of the Earth**

The teacher stood in the classroom, he waved his hands excitedly as he spoke, and his face was glowing from emotion.

"When G-d created Adam the first man, He commanded him six commandments regarding: idolatry, blasphemy, murder, illicit relations, theft, and the establishment of courts.

In addition, G-d forbade Man and his descendants to eat meat offish, animals, or beasts, and this prohibition remained in force for 1,656 years, until G-d permitted Noach and his sons to eat meat.

At this time, G-d commanded Noach the seventh and final commandment - the prohibition of eating a limb from a living animal, as the verse states: 'But live flesh, its blood you shall not eat' (Bereshit 9:4).

Hundreds of years passed, and when Avraham our forefather was 99, G-d commanded an eighth commandment, which is the mitzvah of circumcision.

His son, Isaac, received the ninth commandment, which is the mitzvah of tithing - to separate a tenth of the produce for charity. Isaac, who was commanded regarding this, acquired land and sowed it with produce, and G-d sent him tremendous blessing in the crops, as the verse states: 'And Isaac sowed that land, and found in that year a hundredfold, and G-d blessed him' (ibid. 26:12). Rashi explains:

"They estimated how much the field was supposed to produce, and it produced one hundred times that amount. Our sages say, this estimation was for tithes."

The years continued to pass.  
And in the year 2,185 to the

creation of the world, our  
forefather Yaakov fled to Charan."

### Yaakov's Vow To Tithe

On his way to Charan, our  
forefather Yaakov lingered in  
Bethel and prayed there.

Afterwards, he wished to  
continue on his journey to Charan,  
but the Holy One, blessed be He,  
delayed him, for He desired to  
reveal Himself to him. Since at that  
time Yaakov was at the time  
unmarried, the Divine Presence was  
not revealed to him while awake.

Instead, The Holy One,  
blessed be He, caused the  
sun to set two hours early,  
and a thick, profound darkness  
filled the universe, and Yaakov,  
experiencing this, was compelled  
to stop and rest for the night.

In his dream, he merited to  
see divine visions:

"And he dreamed, and behold,  
a ladder was set upon the earth,  
and the top of it reached to heaven;

and behold, the angels of G-d  
were ascending and descending  
from it. And behold, G-d stood  
above him..." (Bereshit 28:12-13).

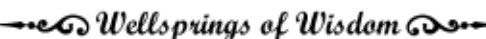
When he awoke from his  
sleep, he vowed:

"If G-d will be with me, and  
will guard me in this way that I go,  
and will give me bread to eat, and  
clothing to wear... And of all that  
You give me, I will surely give a  
tenth to You" (Bereshit 28:20-22).

Yaakov vowed then and  
there, that from all that G-d  
would give him, he would set  
aside a tithe, and would add an  
additional tithe - that is, a total of  
20 percent, or a 'fifth'.

In 'Tiyul BaPardes',<sup>20</sup> the  
theme of 'fifth' is elaborated upon:

King David says: "The days of  
our years are seventy years" (Psalms  
90:10), meaning that the average



20. Chelek HaRemez (page 69), by Rabbi Chaim, brother of the Maharal of Prague.

**Parshat Lech Lecha - A Question That Created an Empty Space.**

lifespan of a person is seventy years. Now, if we divide the number seventy by five, we get fourteen years, which is a fifth of one's life.

Yaakov served his Creator with the mystical idea of 'fifths'.

He studied Torah in the study hall of Shem and Eber for fourteen consecutive years, without any distractions.

After that, he dedicated himself for fourteen years to building a family in fulfillment of the commandment of "Be fruitful and multiply".

When he merited that his treasures of silver and gold multiplied like sand, he set aside a fifth from it, as he had vowed:

"And of all that You give me, I will surely give a tenth to You".

Thus, Yaakov dedicated a fifth of his lifetime to Torah study, a fifth to fulfilling the commandment of procreation, and from his wealth, he gave a fifth.

These three themes are hinted in the words of the prophet: "You give truth to Yaakov" (Micah 7:20), 'truth' (אמת - emet) is acronym for woman (אשה - isha), money (ממון - mamon), Torah (תורה - Torah), in which all three he excelled and dedicated a fifth to.

The Chida adds further<sup>21</sup> that Yaakov also set aside a fifth of his sons to the service of G-d, namely Levi and Issachar.<sup>22</sup>

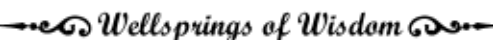
**A Question That Created an Empty Space.**

The teacher summed up the discourse up to this point and said:

"Now, after all this long introduction we've learned, we understand that the service

common to all of the forefathers is the practice of tithes.

We also learned that each of the forefathers added another



21. Mar'it Ha'Ayin (Ketubot 49b).

22. The above is based on 'Umatok Ha'Or' (Bereshit - Volume 2, p. 336).

**Parshat Lech Lecha - The Descent of The Tree of Knowledge**

aspect to the commandment of setting aside tithes.

Avraham set aside tithe from his wealth, Isaac set aside tithe from his produce, and Yaakov set aside tithe from all that G-d had given him, and even added more than his forebears by separating from his possessions a double tithe.

A small hand was raised from the back of the classroom.

"Yes, Moishele."

"In Parshat Toldot, which we read in two weeks time" began Moishele, "it is stated that Esau was a master of hunting, which our sages interpret to mean that he knew how to hunt and deceive his father with his mouth, and he would ask: Father, how does one tithe salt and the straw?"

Because of this, Isaac thought he was meticulous in commandments, and therefore loved him dearly as the verse says: 'And Isaac loved Esau

because the game was in his mouth' (Bereshit 25:28).

Now, seemingly, Esau wanted to continue the practice of his forefathers - the practice of tithes - and he too wanted to add another aspect to the practice of tithes, and therefore wanted to set aside tithes from salt and straw.

If so, why did our sages decide and say that Esau did not intend this seriously but only wanted to deceive his father?

Furthermore, why did they label him a 'deceiver' (רמאי - ramai), and not call him by another name like 'flatterer' or 'liar', etc.?"

The teacher's eyes blinked in confusion, he had not anticipated such a novel question.

Just right then, the sound of the school bell was heard, "Moishele, it's late now; the school day has just ended. G-d willing, tomorrow I will give you a satisfying answer."

**The Descent of The Tree of Knowledge**

The teacher left the classroom, his forehead furrowed with

wrinkles. "I promised to answer Moishele's question, and I

Parshat Lech Lecha - The Descent of The Tree of Knowledge

don't even know where to look."

In the evening prayers that night he recited the blessing, "You graciously endow", with extra intention, and he pleaded that G-d enlighten his eyes with the light of the Torah.

At the end of the prayer, he approached the library, and pulled out a book, in search of an explanation.

The book he chanced upon was 'Dan Yadin'<sup>23</sup> by the Kabbalist Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol, and so it read:<sup>24</sup>

On the sixth day of Creation, the Holy One, blessed be He, created Man, placed him in the Garden of Eden, and commanded him: "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but from the Tree of Knowledge you shall not eat."

Adam looked at the Tree of Knowledge and saw that it was an

etrog tree, a tree that is good for food and desirable to the eyes. He feared that his wife might be tempted to eat from it, and he decided to add to the command of G-d (who merely forbade eating from the Tree of Knowledge) and told her: The Holy One, blessed be He, commanded us not to touch the Tree of Knowledge - the etrog tree - at all.

The serpent stood aside, listening to the conversation between Adam and his wife, and when he heard Adam's words to his wife, he rubbed his hands with pleasure.

The serpent approached the woman and said in a voice arousing pity: "Poor you, so many wonderful fruits grow here, and you're not allowed to eat them."

The woman immediately responded to the serpent's deceitful words: "Heaven forbid, we may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden, only from one tree we're

---

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

---

23. A commentary on 'Sefer Karnayim', by the Kabbalist Rabbi Aharon of Kardina, and it is printed alongside it.

Some additional details were gleaned from his book 'Nitzotzei Shimshon' (Toldot).

24. In Essay 12.

**Parshat Lech Lecha - The Blemish of Adam and Correction of Avraham**

forbidden to eat and touch - 'And the woman said to the serpent: Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, G-d has said: You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die' (Bereshit 3:2-3)."

A coarse and jarring laugh was suddenly heard. "Did you just say that whoever touches the Tree of Knowledge will die? Come, see for yourself how I shake this tree, and nothing happens to me."

The serpent approached the tree and began to shake it.

[In fear, the tree began to cry out, "Master of the Universe, please, 'Let not the foot of pride overtake me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me' (Psalms 36:12)" - the initials of these words (אֵל תְּבוֹאֲנֵי רֶגֶל גְּאוּנָה וְיָד, אֶתְרוּג) famously spell 'etrog' (אתרוג).]

The woman saw that the serpent shook the tree and nothing happened and was tempted to eat from it, and afterward, she also gave to her husband to eat from it.

Through this sin of the Tree of Knowledge, the entirety of creation was blemished.

### **The Blemish of Adam and Correction of Avraham**

As per his custom, this teaching of the Kabbalist Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol, involves Kabbalistic ideas and much use of Gematria (numerology), most of which can be understood to some level by the layman too., and it goes as follows:

As is known, one of the holy names of G-d is the 'Name of 72' (letters), and this name is composed of 216 (numerically 'Gevurah') letters.

This name is further divided into 72 variations of the Divine Name, each name consisting of three letters.

The final 72<sup>nd</sup> variation of the Divine Name, is the name (יִרְ"ת), which equals the numerical value of 'etrog' (אתרוג), and when Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge, he caused a terrible blemish to this name.

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Esau Has A Novel Idea For Rectification**

Now, in addition to the blemish created in this holy Divine Name, his sin increased vitality to unholy and impure powers, and specifically to the power of 'מחלת', and therefore many impure forces clung to him for the next 130 years in which he was separated from his wife, Eve.

After 1948 years to the creation of the world, the great light of Avraham our forefather shone forth in the world, and he began to rectify the sin of Adam.

**Esau Has A Novel Idea For Rectification**

When Isaac was 60 years old, twins were born to him, and he named the first Esau and the second Yaakov. We find<sup>26</sup> that when Esau was born, they saw that on his thigh was engraved the image of a serpent, indicating that he was

G-d revealed to him that the path to rectify Adam's sin is through the fulfillment of the commandment of tithes. In this manner he would rectify the name (יִרְיָת) that was blemished. Numerically, tithes - 'ma'aser' (מעשר), equals the value of (יִרְיָת).

Afterward, Isaac continued the rectification of the name (יִרְיָת), and he too set aside tithes.<sup>25</sup>

the continuation of the impurity and unholiness of the primordial serpent.

Years passed, and the serpent's power embedded in Esau began to reveal itself. As the verse states: "And the boys grew; and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field"

...*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

25. Rabbi Eliezer Fishel of Stryzow wrote in 'Midrash Lepirushim' (page 116):

"It is known that the forefathers of the world rectified the sin of Adam, and therefore, numerically, 'אברהם יצחק ויעקב' equal (כח) (כח) being that they had the power to rectify this Divine Name.

Likewise, we say in prayers, 'וְיִזְכֹּר חֲסֵדֵי אֲבוֹת', and the last letters of these words spell out the Divine Name (יִרְיָת), which they rectified."

26. Rabbi Menachem Tzioni, In his book Tziyoni on Parshat Toldot (s.v. "Vayeitze HaRishon Admoni").

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Esau's True Evil Intentions**

(Bereshit 25:27), which the Targum Yonatan translates as a "a deceiver" (יְנַחֵשׁוּרִי - hinting to the serpent).

Esau saw his father setting aside tithes, and with each separation, he continued the rectification of the Divine Name (יְרִי"ת), and Esau became anxious and sought a way to 'torpedo' this process.

An idea came to his mind. He approached his father and said:

“I have an idea. You, Father, are the leading halachic authority of the generation. If you rule that salt and straw are also obligated in tithes, we can rectify the Divine Name of (בן) as well:<sup>27</sup>

In the word 'melach' (מֶלַח - salt), there are three letters, and when we take a 'tithes', or ten percent, from the first two letters, (מ and ל, -

the letter ׀ is less than a ten and cannot be tithed), and we can take a 'tithes', from the word 'teven' (תֵּבֵן - straw), from the two letters (ת and ׀), we get the numerical value of 52, which represents the Divine Name of (בן).

Thus, by fulfilling the commandment of tithing, with salt and straw as well, we will add even more strength and vitality to the 72<sup>nd</sup> Divine Name (יְרִי"ת).

Father, If you agree with me and rule that we must set aside tithes from salt and straw, through our physical actions, we will draw down great spiritual energy and rectification.”

His father Isaac was filled with joy and exclaimed, “Blessed is he who has a son who cares so much for the rectification of the Shechinah.

**Esau's True Evil Intentions**

Our sages reveal that Esau's true intentions were exactly the

opposite; his aim was to increase the power of impurity in the world.

...*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...  


---

*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

27. In mystical terms the etrog, (which required correction and rectification) is related to the attribute of Malchut

(Kingship), which is revealed and connected to the Divine Name of (בן).

**Parshat Lech Lecha - Esau's Marriages - The Alternative Plan**

He wanted that his righteous father Isaac would rule that salt and straw are obligated in tithes, and then, Esau would set aside tithes from them, but he had no use for the tithes at all, he was interested in what remained after the giving of the tithes.

'Melach' (מלח - salt) and 'teven' (תבן - straw) have a combined numerical value of 530. If you

subtract the sum of 52 (which were the tithes), you're left with 478, which is precisely the numerical value of the impurity and unholiness of (מחולת).

And it was to this terrible impurity that Esau wanted to attach to his father.

This was the nature of the deceit of Esau: while his words implied one thing, his true aim was entirely different, and indeed opposite of it.

**Esau's Marriages - The Alternative Plan**

Esau's initial plan did not end up materializing, Isaac continued the Divine service of setting aside tithes repeatedly.

Esau gnashed his teeth in frustration, but consoled himself that at least his brother Yaakov wasn't engaged in setting aside tithes, he sat in the study hall and engaged in Torah study day and night. Even the meals brought to him there, were tithed beforehand.

However, to Esau's dismay, when Yaakov reached the age of 63, his father Isaac called him and commanded: "Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel

your mother's father, and take for yourself a wife from there, from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. May G-d Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, so that you may become a large nation of people. May He give you the blessing of Avraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may take possession of the land where you now live as a stranger, the land G-d gave to Avraham" (Bereshit 28:2-4).

Yaakov set out on his journey, and Esau tore out his hair in grief: "Another one joins the practice of tithes?! In the

## Parshat Lech Lecha - Yaakov Tithes Doubly

end, these righteous people will kill me, and the powers of impurity that I embody."

He sought and found a way to prevent the spread of the light.

Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli explains:

The verse states: "Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael the son of Avraham, sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he already had" (Bereshit 28:9).

Esau did not give up on his initial plan to set aside tithes from salt and straw and use the 'remainder' for the unholy forces.

Once he saw that he couldn't succeed through the giving of tithes (since his father ruled that they are exempt from tithes), he found a way by marrying the granddaughter of Avraham:

He married "Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael"; 'melach' (מלח - salt) is the root of the word 'Mahalath' (מחלת), and 'Ishmael' (ישמעאל), with the inclusion of the word itself, equals the numerical value of 'seven' (שבון - straw).

In this manner, he indeed succeeded in his unholy endeavor, and as Rashi comments on this verse about these marriages: "He added wickedness upon his prior wickedness".

## Yaakov Tithes Doubly

At the age of 63, Yaakov was commanded by his father to go to Charan and take a wife. But he felt he wasn't yet ready, and he went and immersed himself in the study halls of Torah for the next 14 years.

Only at the end of this period, at the age of 77, did he leave the study hall and begin his journey to Charan.

Midway, when he reached Bethel, he understood and felt that impurity had increased in the world and that giving only one tithe from one's possessions would no longer suffice.

He therefore undertook: "And of all that You give me, I will surely give a tenth to You" (literally - "tithes, I will tithe to You") (Bereshit

Parshat Lech Lecha - Yaakov Tithes Doubly

28:22) - “I will set aside two tithes to hasten the rectification of the Divine Name (יִרְיֵת).

This is true today as well, through properly fulfilling the commandment of tithing, we merit to rectify the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, which still remains to be completely rectified.

In this context, it is worth noting that Rabbi Yisrael Meir of Radin ruled in his book ‘Ahavat Chesed’<sup>28</sup> that there is significance in setting aside exactly a tithe.

If one wishes to give more than a tithe (but no more than a fifth is acceptable), he should set aside a tenth and declare it as the ‘tithe’, and the rest of the money he should give simply as ‘charity’.

He further ruled that if one wishes to set aside a fifth of his assets for charity (which is the most meticulous and proper amount to give), one should separate the fifth in two parts. The first part or ten percent he should set aside as a tithe and declare it ‘ma’aser’

---

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

---

**28.** Part II, Chapter 19, Section 3:

“Know that the measure of tithe applies to one who conducts himself with average generosity, but one who wishes to act with a greater generosity must set aside one-fifth of his possessions.

The Sages based this on the verse: "And of all that You give me, I will surely give a tenth to You" (literally - “tithe, I will tithe to You”) (Bereishit 28:22), where two mentions of the word ‘tithe’ imply a fifth.

This should be practiced as follows: the tithe is first taken from the principal sum, and thereafter it is taken from the profits that are gained.

The sum of this fifth should be divided as follows: half to Torah scholars, similar to

the ‘first tithe’ given to the Kohanim and Levites to strengthen their Torah learning, as in the verse in Divrei Hayamim (II 31:4), and the second half should be distributed for other mitzvah purposes.

Since the verse does not explicitly mention giving a fifth, it is implied that it is better to give the fifth as two tithes of ten percent. The reason being, that the tithes hint to great mysteries, as explained in many places, and therefore, it is appropriate not to mix them with an additional amount.

The same is true for one who wishes to give more than a tithe but less than fifth. It is better to give exactly a tithe, and afterward, to consider any additional giving as general charity.”

**Parshat Lech Lecha - The Power of the Satan Increased**

(tithing), and only afterward, he may set aside the additional ten percent and declare it 'ma'aser' as well.

In this manner, one maintains the great virtue of 'tithing' and giving ten percent of one's net income to charity.

**The Power of the Satan Increased**

Yaakov arrived at Laban's house and remained there for twenty years.

The first rays of sunlight penetrated through the window, and the teacher raised his tired eyes in astonishment: "Where did the night disappear? Just a moment ago, I first opened 'Dan Yadin'<sup>29</sup> by Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol, following the evening prayers, and now the time has already come for the morning service?!"

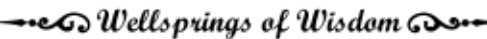
At the end of this period, he left Laban's house rich and successful in all areas, as the verse states: "And the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys" (Bereshit 30:43).

He again recited the blessing, "You graciously endow", with extra intention, but now he pleaded that G-d assist him in explaining such a profound answer to sixth grade students.

But somehow, Yaakov forgot to set aside tithes from his possessions.

As a result, the power of the impure forces increased once again, and they fought with Yaakov: "And Yaakov was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak" (Bereshit 32:25).

He then reminded himself, "I have the great fortune this year to teach great Torah scholars, they will surely understand."



**29.** A commentary on 'Sefer Karnayim', by the Kabbalist Rabbi Aharon of Kardina, and it is printed alongside it.

Some additional details were gleaned from his book 'Nitzotzei Shimshon' (Toldot).

## Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. The Torah commands us to bring joy to the Levites and give them regularly their rightful tithes, and to share with them during the festivals from the wealth that G-d has given us so that they too can rejoice in the festival.

Since the Levites were chosen by G-d to serve in the Temple and have no portion and inheritance in the land to sustain themselves, it is therefore incumbent upon the rest of the Jewish community to support them generously.

2. In our times, when the Temple is no longer standing and the Levites make a regular living from their own labor, this commandment and obligation continues toward the Torah scholars who dedicate their entire lives to studying the Torah, even though by doing so they often live in poverty. Their sole intention is to bring pleasure to G-d and to draw down grace, kindness, mercy, and divine protection upon all of Israel wherever they dwell, and they are the true 'tribe of Levi' in our times.

3. Therefore, the Torah warns us with a severe prohibition against ignoring the distress of these Torah scholars who dedicate their entire lives to G-d.

It is a sacred duty for every member of Israel to overcome the nature of stinginess, and to open his heart and hand, and to grant Torah scholars a respectable portion of what G-d has blessed him with.

4. The Torah promises that when one merits to bestow from the wealth that G-d has given him to Torah scholars, not only will this not cause him any lack, but on the contrary, G-d will expand his boundaries and grant him great wealth. Giving tithes to charity is a tried and tested remedy to merit great wealth.

5. We must remember that in the depth of our exile, we have no other means of salvation but the Torah; only it can protect us from the many waters threatening to overwhelm us. Through the merit of studying Torah, the Jewish people merit superior protection

from all the menacing nations surrounding us.

Anyone who, for any reason, does not merit to study Torah all day but nonetheless wishes to be connected to the Torah constantly and protect him and his household from all harm - they must support with their wealth Torah scholars who engage in Torah day and night, and it will be considered in Heaven as if they were engaged in Torah to the same extent.

6. When the Creator, blessed be He, bestows upon a person wealth more than necessary for his livelihood, it is a sign from Heaven that he has been chosen to serve as a conduit for transferring divine abundance to the poor and needy, and to reveal G-d's Kingship in the world. This is achieved by assisting Torah scholars, thereby increasing Torah in the world and revealing His kingship.

It is analogous to a conduit. When it is clean and flows quickly, one

continues to pour into it generously and fill it, but if a blockage occurs and it does not flow - one stops filling it, and it empties and dries up.

7. There is great importance, and indeed it is imperative to set aside tithes from one's net income.

If one wishes to give more than a tithe, he should first set aside the tithe of ten percent and declare it a 'tithe', and all the following money he should give simply as 'charity'.

Similarly, if one wishes to go beyond the letter of the law and fulfill this commandment meticulously by setting aside a fifth of his assets for charity, he too should separate the fifth in two parts.

Firstly, he should set aside the original tithe and declare it 'ma'aser' (ten percent), and only afterward, he should set aside the second ten percent. In this manner, one maintains the great virtue of 'tithing' and giving ten percent of one's net income to charity.

**Shabbat Shalom!**

” A person must rejoice when the time for  
**prayer**

as the author of the Tanya says that:

every Jew, wherever he is, receives from G-d at the time of prayer a gift called **"Mochin D'Gadlut,"** meaning that the understanding of everything is expansive before him, as is written  
**"Open wide your mouth and I will fill it" ”**



- Discounts for institutions / bulk orders
- Can be ordered with engraved dedications

For orders:

☎ +1 (954) 800-6526 📞 +972-54-867-3086

666 HaKatzir Street, Netivot





Take part in spreading Torah around the world!

**Together we will bring  
the light to everyone!**



Interested in receiving the booklets for your synagogue?  
Want to distribute the booklets in the  
synagogues of your city?

**Contact us:**

📞 +1 (954) 800-6526 📱 +972-54-867-3086

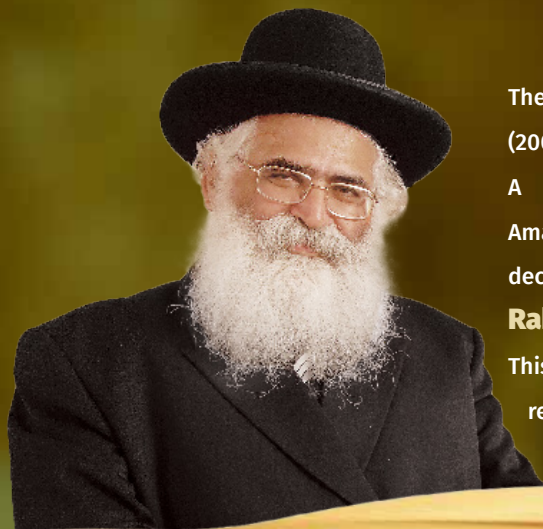
# New

Delivered in special



## 'Betzur Yarum' - Soft Cover

# Travel edition



The original set, first printed in 5767 (2007), consisting of 17 volumes. A fascinating interpretation on "Likutei Amarim", the first part of Tanya, culled from decades of lessons by our venerable teacher, **Rabbi Yoram Abargel**, of blessed memory. This series provides endless practical tools and real life advice for every Jew in all areas of life.



For orders:

☎ +1 (954) 800-6526 📞 +972-54-867-3086

666 HaKatzir Street, Netivot



**Free distribution**

Preserve publication sanctity  
by use of Genizah

**Do You Enjoy Mesilot?**



Shabbat Times  
**Lech Lecha**

8<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan, 5785

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:26 pm	5:25 pm	5:55 pm
Miami	5:17 pm	6:10 pm	6:46 pm
Los Angeles	4:36 pm	5:32 pm	6:05 pm
Montreal	4:13 pm	5:17 pm	5:42 pm
Toronto	4:41 pm	5:43 pm	6:10 pm
London	4:03 pm	5:12 pm	5:31 pm
Jerusalem	4:28 pm	5:18 pm	5:53 pm
Tel Aviv	4:25 pm	5:15 pm	5:49 pm
Haifa	4:23 pm	5:16 pm	5:49 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:26 pm	5:19 pm	5:53 pm

**Pathways to the Heart**

From the Words of

**HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l**

*The righteous were never willing to forgo even a moment of Torah study, even when offered riches, and wondrous and enticing rewards.*

*As Rabbi Yossi Ben Kisma answered to the individual who offered him to come and live in his city - 'Even if you provide me with all the gold and silver and precious stones of the world, I will not live anywhere but in a place of Torah' (Avot, 6:9).*

*They were willing to make do with whatever they possessed, they weren't bothered the slightest*



**Become a Partner!**

For Donations:

American Friends of Netivot Inc  
Signature Bank

Account # 1504470357

261 Madison Avenue New York, NY 10016  
Routing # 026013576

Or Visit: [Hameir-Laarets.org.il/Donate](http://Hameir-Laarets.org.il/Donate)

RECOGNIZED BY THE IRS AS A 501(C)(3)  
TAX DEDUCTIBLE ORGANIZATION

**Receive Mesilot Weekly Anywhere Worldwide!**  
- Free of Charge -



Distribute Pathways to the Soul in Your Synagogue!  
Join Now!



**Ask The Rabbi!**



Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita responds to questions directly and discreetly

**Media**

[hameir-laarets.org.il/en](http://hameir-laarets.org.il/en)

Hameir Laarets

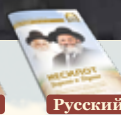
(954) 800-6526

054-870-8737

[en@h-l.org.il](mailto:en@h-l.org.il)



**Français**  
joindre :



**Русский**  
присоединиться:



**English**  
to join:



**Español**  
Para unirse:



**עברית**  
להצטרפות:

