

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 158

Emor | The Goal - To Be A Chariot to the Divine

MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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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

 www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en

 HaKatzir 666, Netivot, Israel

 (954) 800-6526

 HameirLaaretsEN

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 054-870-8737

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Parshat Emor

Ancient Egypt, Year 2368 to Creation

The terrible decree of the wicked Pharaoh was at its peak.¹

The evil and heartless Egyptians went from house to house, searching for every newborn baby.

The hearts of the people of Israel were filled with great grief and sorrow. and salty tears washed their faces.

One day, in the house of Amram, a new baby was born, and suddenly, the whole house was filled with light.²

It was a sublime light, a light that elevated all those present in the house to lofty and high places; divine tranquility filled their hearts, and a longing for redemption intensified.

Yocheved, his mother, who feared the dreaded visit of the Egyptian soldiers, built a basket for the newborn and placed it in the Nile.

The Al-mighty, the Merciful Father, who governs His world with divine providence, placed in the heart of Pharaoh's daughter, Batya, the desire to stroll by the Nile.

As Batya went by the Nile and looked on curiously, she saw a small ark slowly floating among the reeds.

Batya extended her hand, drew the ark, and found within it a baby whose face was radiant, on whom the Divine Presence seemed to rest.³

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

1. "**And** Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, 'Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall make live.'" (Exodus 1:22)

2. **The** Talmud states (Sotah 12b): "And she saw him that he was good" (Exodus 2:2)

- The sages said, when Moses was born, the entire house was filled with light.

3. "**And** she opened and she saw the child" (Exodus 2:6) - Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Chanina said: She saw the Divine Presence with him (Sotah 12b).

She decided to adopt him - "And he was to her as a son, and she called his name Moses, saying, 'For I drew him out of the water'" (Exodus 2:10).

In a short time, Moses became one of the most important and central figures in Pharaoh's palace.

There, among the decorated walls with gold and sparkling ornaments, surrounded by hundreds of servants waiting for his command, Moses's spiritual stature grew and intensified.

We do not have many details about those years and the hard trials he went through, but it is clear that these were most difficult years, years of youthful energy and desires, and precisely during those years, Moses was prince in the palace of the most powerful king of the time.

So to speak, all the challenges of the world knocked on the doors of his inner world: 'Moses, open for us' - they pleaded.

However, Moses did not succumb, and with supreme bravery, he stood firmly against all the challenges.

His inner world grew stronger, and went on to illuminate. While we have no details about this, we can be certain that we have no understanding even in a small fraction of the vitality of the light that was his inner world.

Yet, despite the inner tranquil life that he experienced in the turbulent surroundings that he found himself in, Moses felt a sense of lack gnawing at him.⁴

And so he rose up and went outside to feel and to sense the inner world of the people of Israel.⁵

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

4. The inner life of Moses was tumultuous, filled with struggles, battles, and victories. A life in which at every moment there were conquests of new territories within the soul, turning it into a vessel worthy of revealing G-d's blessed light.

5. For the essence of the soul's vitality comes through fulfilling the commandment of loving your fellow Jew, and when it is lacking, a person is spiritually ill.

As the revered Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi wrote (Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh 31):

As stated in the verse: "And it came to pass in those days, Moses had grown, and he went out to his brethren, and he meditated upon

their burdens.⁶ And he saw an Egyptian strike a Hebrew man from among his brothers. And he looked this way and that and saw

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

“As is known, the dwelling place of the 'nefesh' is in the liver, the dwelling place of the 'ruach' is in the heart, and the dwelling place of the 'neshama' is in the brain.

The 'ruach' which resides in the heart enclothes itself within the blood that originates from the heart, and spreads to all the organs.

This spirit of life of blood goes round and round within all the organs and the tendons contained within them and returns to the heart.

If the circulation and movement of this spirit of life are as they should be, constantly, as is its nature ordained from G-d - then the person is perfectly healthy, for all the organs are connected together and receive their appropriate vitality from the heart through this circulation.

But if there is an organ or tendon in the body that is damaged, then it prevents, impedes, or diminishes the circulation and movement of the blood with the life spirit enclothed in it, and this causes the connection of all the organs to the heart via this circulation to be severed or diminished - and then the person falls ill, G-d forbid.

The Baal HaTanya continues and says:

So too, by analogy -

G-d gives life at every moment to all existence. This lofty light is called 'Shechina' (Divine Presence), meaning that it dwells within reality, but the main place of the Shechina is within the souls of Israel, and the 'Shechina' is called 'heart' to the souls which are called 'organs'.

When all the souls of the people of Israel are attached and connected together - then the circulation and movement of vitality and influence is drawn from the Shechina to all of existence.

This is true also from below to above, since the end is wedged in the beginning, thus by binding and connecting all the souls together, through them all the worlds as well are connected to the One G-d and cling to Him, blessed be He.

This explains the statement of our Sages (Yoma 9b): "the destruction of the Second Temple and the fall of Israel into exile, and the departure of the Shechina and its descent into Edom in exile, as it were, was all due to the sin of baseless hatred and the division of the hearts, may G-d save us.

6. Rashi comments on: 'and he meditated upon their burdens' - "He set his eyes and his heart to be distressed over them."

that no one was there, and struck the Egyptian and buried him in the sand" (Exodus 2:11-12).

Following this story, Moses went out even further, as we shall elaborate.

Sinai Desert, Year 2448 to Creation

Moses was twenty years old when he went out to his brethren and killed the Egyptian.⁷

We find in the writings of the holy Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz (the 'Ba'al Hafla'ah') a description of the sequence of events:⁸

After the death of Joseph, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, took control over the people of Israel and turned them into slaves.

In order to streamline the work, he divided the Jews into groups, each containing ten Jews, and over them, he appointed a 'Jewish officer', and over every

ten Jewish officers, he appointed one Egyptian taskmaster.⁹

One of the Jewish officers appointed by Pharaoh was Dathan from the tribe of Reuben, who was married to Shlomit Bat Divri from the tribe of Dan. Over Dathan was an Egyptian taskmaster who was responsible for him together with nine other Jewish officers.

Shlomit bat Divri was the only Hebrew woman in Egypt who scoffed at the laws of modesty, 'Why take the laws of modesty so seriously, better that life be taken lightly' - she had thought.

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

7. Midrash Rabbah (Exodus, 1:30).

8. "Panim Yafot" (Leviticus 24:10, "And the son of an Israelite woman went out").

He demonstrates from the Talmud (Shabbat 89b) that the incident of the blasphemer occurred after the incident of Korach (according to the opinion that the wood-gatherer and the blasphemer were in the same period).

9. To quote the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah, Section 32 - Letter 4): The Egyptians were appointed taskmasters and the Israelite officers were appointed under them. A taskmaster was appointed over ten officers, and the Jewish officers were each appointed over ten Israelites. Thus, an Egyptian taskmaster was appointed to oversee a hundred people.

One day, the Egyptian taskmaster received an order from the 'housing ministry' that he must finish the scaffolding in the particular area within one day. The 'taskmaster', who was under pressure, did not wait until the Jewish officers under him arrived with the appointed slaves but got up himself while it was still night and went to the officers' houses to hurry them to work.

And so he went from house to house until he arrived at Dathan's house.

With blows and violence, he drove Dathan out of his house to work.

After Dathan had left the house, the Egyptian then entered Dathan's house.

Dathan had felt that something improper was happening in his house between the Egyptian and his wife, and therefore returned to his house, whereupon he witnessed the Egyptian coming out of it.

The Egyptian saw Dathan and realized that Dathan must have known everything, and decided to kill him. All day long that day, he

beat him mercilessly and shouted: "Work harder, you lazy one!"

At that moment, Pharaoh's 'adopted son' - Moses - happened to visit that particular construction site. The verse relates what happened next: "And he looked this way and that and saw that no one was there, and struck the Egyptian and buried him in the sand" (Exodus 2:12).

Rashi explains: 'He looked this way and that' - he saw what he did to him at home (with his wife) and what he did to him in the field (beating him to near death) and struck the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

From the disgraceful act with the Egyptian, Shlomit bat Divri became pregnant, and after nine months, gave birth to a son.

This son, whose name is not known, was born at the peak of the exile, when darkness prevailed to the utmost, at a time when the Jewish hearts had lost all will and hope. It was in this darkness that the boy grew up and lived for many long years.

Finally, the light of redemption burst forth in a wide

variety of wonders - ten plagues, the splitting of the Sea, the war with Amalek, manna from Heaven, water from the well, the clouds of glory, and the pillar of fire.

Shlomit's son stood by and saw all these, and his inner world began to illuminate.

And then one day, a terrible dispute erupted, Korach decided to challenge Moses' authority, and started a battle to which Dathan, the husband of Shlomit, joined heartily.

Their end is well known: "And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that belonged to Korach, and all their goods. They, and all that belonged to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation" (Numbers 16:32-33).

When the dust had cleared and the debacle had ended, Korach and all those related to him, as well as Dathan, his wife Shlomit and all their family, were swallowed deep into the earth. The vast area that was once filled with the houses of Korach's

assembly was now entirely emptied of its inhabitants.

In the midst of all this vast area, suddenly appeared the son of Shlomit bat Divri, the sole survivor of the entire event.

The questions were heard: 'How could this be? Everyone who participated in the dispute was left with no trace behind!'

The secret was now discovered and revealed. This son was none other than the son of the Egyptian who had been involved with Shlomit, and since he was not the son of Dathan, but rather of an Egyptian - he was spared from punishment of Dathan and the assembly of Korach.

When the members of the tribe of Reuben saw this, they expelled him from among them, saying: "You are not Dathan's son, and you have nothing to do here."

He then approached the members of the tribe of Dan and argued: "My mother was from the tribe of Dan, therefore accept me among you."

However, the sons of Dan did not agree, and said to him:

Parshat Emor - Yemen, Year 4425 to Creation

"Every man by their flag with the ensign of their father's house shall the Jewish nation camp"

(Numbers 2:2).

Since he was excluded from both sides, he invited the tribe of Dan to a Torah judgment before Moses.

He lost the case, Moses ruled that he indeed had no part in the tribe of Dan.

Shlomit's son then felt great shame and anger, and above all he felt a great lack.

He rose and went out from his inner world, from the world

of faith, and denied the principle of G-d's existence, as stated in our Parsha:

"And the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and the son of the Israelite woman and an Israelite man fought each other in the camp; The Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of G-d, and cursed. And they brought him to Moses: And his mother's name was Shlomit, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan" (Leviticus 24:10-11).

We bring yet another story that illustrates a feeling of lack.

Yemen, Year 4425 to Creation

The following story was told by Rabbi Yitzhak HersHKovitz ('Nitzotzot', Devarim - page 357):

The king of Yemen was a very sad king who had a servant that was constantly happy, extremely happy.

Every morning, the servant woke the king with a smile and a song, served him a hearty breakfast with melodies, and approached the day's tasks with simplicity, joy, and happiness.

One day, the king became very curious about how such a miserable servant managed to be so happy, and summoned him to his room, closed the door, and with a commanding tone demanded: "Reveal to me at once, what is your secret?"

"Secret?" The servant was puzzled: "What secret?"

"The secret to your happiness", the king replied. "Why

are you always happy, always cheerful, and never sad, why?"

“My lord, the servant answered humbly, I have not yet found a reason to be sad. His Majesty honors me with the privilege to serve him; My family lives happily in a home provided by the kingdom; We have clothes, we have food, and occasionally I even receive a few golden coins from His Majesty. Why should I not be happy?" The servant asked with a large pair of joyful eyes.

The king was astounded by the answer, and quickly sent the servant away from his room. He buried his head deep between his hands, and let his thoughts wander.

“It can't be," he thought, "my servant lives off loans, wears old clothes, and is sustained every day from leftovers. What is there to be so happy about?"

He quickly called the wisest of his advisors, told him about the strange conversation he had with the servant, and asked: "Why? Why is this man happy; and from what?"

“Ah,” the advisor answered in a scholarly voice, "it is simply because he is outside the circle, that's why he is so happy."

“Outside the circle?" The king asked.

“Yes.” The advisor replied confidently.

“And that's what brings him happiness?" The king continued his inquiry.

“No, your honor. It does not bring happiness; it's what spares him misery. A person is naturally meant to be happy and content, like a small child."

“Ah,” the king clarified, "to be in the circle - brings misery?"

“Indeed.” - the advisor replied - "and he, the servant, is not in the circle."

“How did he get out of there?" The king kept his line of questioning.

“He didn't get out. He simply never entered."

“What is this circle?"

“Ah, well, best we call it the circle of ninety-nine,” the advisor said.

The king coughed and whispered, “To be honest, I didn't understand anything you just said.”

The advisor was not surprised, “Well that’s clear to me - he said - you will understand only if you let me show you in action, only if you allow your servant to enter the circle.”

“Alright,” the king perked up, “let's force him into the circle.”

“No your Majesty, absolutely not. No one can force anyone to enter this circle.”

“So” - the king snapped dryly - “we'll have to deceive him.”

“No. There's no need” - the advisor determined - “if we merely give him the opportunity, he will enter the circle willingly, on his own, and he will even run there if we just allow him.”

“And he will comprehend that it's going to make him miserable?” The king asked curiously.

“He will, yet still will continue” - the advisor replied - “for he will no longer be able to avoid entering.”

“So, Your Majesty, are you willing to lose a great servant just to understand how this circle works?”

“Yes.” The king replied.

“And you're willing to make a person miserable for no reason?”

“Yes, but I have a very important reason. It will reveal to me the secret of happiness, and I could pass it on to the entire kingdom.”

That very night, the adviser and the king arranged to meet.

“Prepare a leather pouch with ninety-nine gold coins, no less and no more,” the advisor instructed the king before leaving.

“What else? Should I take my guards in case of trouble?”

“Not at all, just the leather pouch with the money.”

That night, the advisor met the king, and together they sneaked out and hid near the servant's house.

The advisor attached a small note to the leather pouch, which read: “This treasure is yours as a reward for being a good person, do enjoy it, but do not tell anyone how you found it.”

Then he tied the pouch to the door of the servant's house, knocked, and ran back to hide.

When the servant came out, he saw the pouch tied to the door and took it inside.

The sage and the king watched these unfolding events from behind the bushes:

The servant cleared everything off his table except for a candle, and sat down and emptied the contents of the pouch.

His mouth opened in astonishment, on the table before him where piled up a mountain of gold coins.

He had never felt a gold coin before, and now stood before a whole mountain of gold, and all of it, without exception, was his !

In excitement, the servant touched the coins and shuffled

them into a pile, and with sparkling eyes, caressed them and adjusted the candle so it illuminated them well.

He was sure that he could just gaze at them endlessly.

Then, he gathered them up, scattered them again, and started making piles of gold.

Each pile he created from stacks of ten coins.

He just counted the sum of the coins he had stacked: “ten, twenty, thirty, forty.”

He then reached the final pile, which contained only nine coins.

“Hey, what's this ?” He was displeased.

He scanned the table looking for the missing coin, and closely inspected the floor, and finally checked the pouch.

“No, it can't be, I must have just miscounted, and he quickly added the last pile to the nine piles and leveled their height, but the tenth pile remained shorter than its nine counterparts.

“Hey, someone has robbed me, he exclaimed, I've been robbed !”

Immediately, he began trembling all over and rummaged through his clothes.

When he found nothing, he laid down on the floor and started crawling, in search of the 100th coin.

All his searches were in vain, he couldn't find the coin.

“Ninety-nine gold coins, that's a lot of money, he thought, but one is missing. A hundred is a complete number, ninety-nine - is not.”

His forehead creased gently, his expression turned grim, and his eyes became small and narrowed. His mouth stretched into a miserable grimace that bared his teeth.

In tense silence, the servant put the coins back into the pouch, checked all around to make sure no one from the household saw him, and hid the pouch among the firewood. Then he took paper and pen and sat down to do some calculations.

“How long do I have to save in order to buy the 100th gold

coin ?” he loudly wondered to himself.

“I'm willing to work hard to get it, and afterward, I won't need to ever work again,” he reassured himself.

“With a hundred coins, one can stop working, yes, stop working. With a hundred coins, a person is considered rich, very rich. With a hundred coins, one can live in comfort, calmly, and happily.”

He finished his calculations and concluded that if he worked and saved from his salary, he could afford a gold coin in twelve years.

“Twelve years, that's a long time” - he thought, “maybe I can ask my wife to join in the efforts and find herself some work in the village,” and besides, I finish work at the palace by five in the afternoon, and until midnight there are enough hours to work and get paid for an extra shift. With joint effort, they could gather the amount over seven years.”

But even seven years is a long time.

Then another creative idea occurred to him: “Maybe I can take the leftover food we have to the village and sell it for a few coins. In fact, the less we eat, the more food we can sell, sell and earn.”

Morning dawned, the sun rose and it began to get hot. The servant peeked into his clothing chest and asked himself: “Why do I even have so many winter clothes and boots, and more than one pair of shoes ? We could sell them !”

“**It's** a sacrifice, but with four years of sacrifice, we can finally reach the 100th coin.”

The king and the advisor had long returned back to the palace; the servant had now entered deep inside the circle of ninety-nine.

Over the following months, the servant implemented the various plans he had conceived. One morning, the servant entered the king's room with a knock on

the door; he was very very tired, worn out, and in a bad mood.

“**What's** happening to you ?” the king inquired politely.

“**What's** happening ? Nothing's happening to me, nothing at all.”

“**Once**, not long ago, you laughed and sang incessantly; what has happened to you after all ?”

“**Your** Majesty,” the servant snapped, “I'm doing my job, right ? What could His Majesty want from me more, that I also be the court jester, a wandering singer ? After all, I'm always struggling, I'm always lacking, what do I have after all” - he concluded in a downtrodden tone.

“**The** side effects of the circle of ninety-nine are now clear,” the king thought to himself. “My servant is now deep inside its cycle of charms, now even a mountain of gold coins won't be able to pull him out. Indeed, the circle of ninety-nine is a closed circle.¹⁰

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

10. Rabbi Yitzchak Hershkowitz concluded his story:

In the book of Ecclesiastes it says, "Sweet is the sleep of a laboring

man, whether he eats little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not allow him to sleep" (Ecclesiastes

5:11).

Parshat Emor - The Feeling of Lack - the Driving Force

This story comes to an end, and we now can process the data. The temperament of the king and his advisor do not interest us; they were 'complicated' people before the incident and remained 'complicated' after it.

The Feeling of Lack - the Driving Force

The purpose of creation is to make a dwelling place for the Al-mighty in the lower realms,¹¹ meaning, G-d's will is that humans reveal His sovereignty in the material world.

If only the Divine reality were revealed, it would be no novelty, for it is the true reality, and there is no other real alternative.¹²

Therefore, the Al-mighty created another reality which

However, we wonder about the joyous and humble servant.

His heart had been so full of simple and natural joy of life, and all his ways were innocent and straightforward.

How did he fall so grandly ?

appears to have a real existence, the reality of impurity.

After creating both realities, He created man, and placed within him two souls, a Divine soul and an animalistic soul.

The animalistic soul is drawn to the desires of this world and sometimes even to impurity, while the Divine soul is drawn to holiness.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

The sure escape from the thicket is through the same way one entered it.

For half of our lives we sacrifice our health to make money, and in the second half, we sacrifice our money for a bit of health. People must not forge money, but must also beware that money makes forgeries out of people.

11. In the words of the Midrash (Tanhuma, Naso, 16): 'When the Holy

One, blessed be He, created the world, He desired to have a dwelling in the lower worlds just as there is in the upper worlds'.

12. The Holy One, blessed be He, specifically desires the divine service of humans, as it is written: 'And You desired praises from those fashioned from clay' (the Musaf prayer of the High Holy Days, as brought in Likutei Moharan I, 4:8).

Man is always pulled between these two forces acting within him, and he must choose which soul to follow.

This is the main virtue of man, that he has the power of choice. By choosing good, he fulfills the purpose of creation, and builds a dwelling place for the Al-mighty in the lower realms.

However, to drive man to use his power of choice and effect change, the Al-mighty created within man a feeling of lack, and this feeling is what drives everything.

In the words of Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler ('Michtav M'Eliyahu', Volume 3 - page 180):

"Pleasure comes only from filling a lack.

A person spends most of his life in a state of lack, always striving to fill his void. There are great obstacles that prevent the filling of his void, but as the obstacles increase, the lack is felt more intensely, and hence the pleasure increases when the lack is eventually filled.

When one achieves his desire easily and without obstacles - his pleasure is minimal, for something that is readily available is almost not felt as a lack.

All this is true with regard to Spiritual pleasure, which also comes from filling a lack.

A person feels the lack of spirituality much more than the lack of material things.

Our sages said (Shaarei Kedusha, Part One - First Gate) - the soul has 613 parts, and corresponding to them are 613 commandments that give them their vitality.

The Talmud states (Bava Kamma 82a): "And they went three days in the desert and found no water" (Exodus 15:22). 'Since they went three days without Torah, they immediately became weary. It is for this reason, that it was decreed to read from the Torah on Monday and Thursday.'

Without Torah, the soul becomes weary from thirst, like someone walking in the desert for days without water.

Parshat Emor - He Desired a Dwelling in the Lower Realms

Likewise, someone who goes about life without fulfilling commandments and good deeds, G-d forbid, removes vitality from their soul, and becomes spiritually unwell.

When a person feels these lacks and strives to fill them, he derives from this fulfillment a much deeper pleasure than the pleasure that comes from fulfilling a material lack.

On the contrary, spiritual pleasure is incomparable, and cannot at all be likened to material pleasure, just as the material lack is insignificant compared to the spiritual lack.

For the material lack is after all limited and measurable,

since all material things are limited, whereas spiritual lack is limitless, as there is no end and limit to spiritual levels.

Whatever be the kind of lack, there is no doubt that pleasure is always derived from filling the lack.

The three stories above illustrate this point, in each tale the feeling of lack that was revealed in them, caused the person to bring about change (however, with regard to a physical lack, a person needs to be careful how he reacts, as mentioned in the stories above).

Now we wish to delve even deeper.

He Desired a Dwelling in the Lower Realms

The purpose of creation is to make a dwelling place for the Al-mighty in the lower realms - meaning, His will is that humans continue and reveal His kingdom in the world.

The main intention and implementation of this is by man building a dwelling for the

Al-mighty within his own inner world.

The Al-mighty wants His divinity to be revealed within the inner world of a person, and that the person feel at all times that G-d is standing before Him, as described in the Tanya (Likkutei Amarim - Chapter 41):

Parshat Emor - He Desired a Dwelling in the Lower Realms

“Behold, the L-rd stands over him and the whole earth is full of His glory, and He looks upon him and examines his innards and heart to see if he serves Him appropriately.”

A person who merits this, and

with all his 248 limbs and 365 sinews feels G-d’s existence, is sanctified and becomes a dwelling for the Shechinah.

He is then called a 'complete person' worthy of standing and serving before Him.¹³

—*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*—

13. Fortunate is the complete person, who merits to feel and see the divine presence at all times.

On this matter, Rabbi Yitzchak Shlomo Unger recounted ('Zichronam Livracha' Part 1 - Page 170):

In the study hall of the great Rabbi Moshe Sofer - the Chatam Sofer - it was the custom that after the morning prayer on Shabbat, there was a break, after which the congregation would return to the synagogue to hear the Torah reading and for the Musaf prayers.

On one Shabbat, the Chatam Sofer went to his house during this break and heard his wife reprimanding their young son Shimon.

The Chatam Sofer asked his son Shimon: What are you troubling your mother about?

Shimon answered: “I had inquired about what is recited in the repetition of the prayer, in the Kedusha, 'Let us sanctify Your Name in the world as it is sanctified in the heavens above', and I don't understand,

who was in Heaven and heard how they sanctify G-d’s name, that could testify that we do as it is done in the heavens above?”

The Chatam Sofer said to him: “That is a good question my son, come with me.”

He took him to the synagogue, and during the Musaf prayer, before the repetition of the Amidah, the Chatam Sofer placed his son on a chair and said: “Put your ears next to the prayer stand during the Kedusha.”

The prayers ended, and the Chatam Sofer asked his son: “Do you still have your question?”

Shimon, with a glowing face, answered: “No.”

The Chatam Sofer asked: “What did you hear?”

Shimon answered: “At first, I heard terrifying shouts and screams, but then I heard beautiful and awe-inspiring melodies, and there are no words that begin to describe even a fraction of the spiritual pleasure that I felt.”

Parshat Emor - One With a Blemish Shall Not Approach

But if, G-d forbid, a person spiritually damages one of his limbs, and cannot feel the divine light within that limb, he is called

'spiritually blemished', and is distanced from divine perceptions.

This principle we learn in our Parsha...

One With a Blemish Shall Not Approach

This week, G-d willing, we read Parshat Emor.

Our Parsha contains 124 verses, including 63 commandments - twenty-four positive commandments and thirty-nine negative commandments.

Two of these negative commandments concern priests with blemishes.¹⁴

The priests serving G-d in the Temple needed to be physically complete, and therefore, any priest who had a blemish is forbidden to perform the sacred service.

As it states: "And the L-rd spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, saying, Whoever of your seed for all generations that has any blemish, should not approach to offer the bread of G-d. For whoever has a blemish, shall not approach" (Leviticus 21:16-18).¹⁵

Indeed, according to the simple understanding of the verses, this commandment applies only to the seed of Aaron the priest.

The Holy Zohar (Emor 90b) however, explains that there are two types of blemishes:

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

Years passed, and Shimon grew up and became known far and wide as Rabbi Shimon Sofer, the author of 'Michtav Sofer'.

14. Namely: The negative commandment (number 275) that a priest with a blemish must not serve in the Temple service, and the negative commandment (number 276)

that even a priest with a temporary blemish must not serve in the Temple service.

15. In total, there are 140 blemishes that disqualify priests, which are: 90 blemishes specific to humans and an additional 50 blemishes common to both humans and animals. (Mishneh Torah, 'Maaseh Hakarbanot' chapters 7-8).

One type is blemishes that pertain to the body, and the second type is blemishes that pertain to the soul.

While the first type, the physical blemishes, applies only to the priests, the second type of blemishes of the soul are applicable to every person.

Just as a priest with a blemish cannot receive the holiness derived from the divine service of the sacrifices, so too a Jew who has a blemish in his

soul cannot merit to receive holiness.¹⁶

Just as there are 140 types of physical blemishes, so too there are 140 blemishes of the soul, several of which are clarified in various Chassidic works.¹⁷

The underlying rule however is that anyone who has a blemish in their soul cannot approach and experience divinity.

Having reached this point, we must clarify: What must we do to merit and feel divinity?

Who Has Sanctified Us with His Commandments

The true question is: How can one merit to be a 'complete person'? How can we merit the revelation of divinity?

The answer to this is actually quite simple, we ourselves recite it dozens of times a day.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

16. Rabbi Aviezer from Tykocin, wrote ('Beit Yaakov' journal, issue 198/199 - page 16):

A deficiency in the body or a limb is called 'a blemish' in the spoken language, but it also denotes moral flaws and spiritual defects, as we learned: 'He who disqualifies, does so with his own blemish' (Kiddushin 70b); 'Do not fault your friend with a blemish

that yours' (Baba Metzia 59b); 'He who is haughty is blemished' (Megillah 24b). The verse says: "Corrupt are they, and not his children; their blemish is their own" (Deuteronomy 32:5).

17. For an example, see "Kovetz Imrei Kodesh" (Leviticus, page 414) by Rabbi Avraham Chaim Roth.

Parshat Emor - Who Has Sanctified Us with His Commandments

Every time we recite a blessing before performing a commandment we say: 'Blessed are You L-rd, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us.'

By performing the commandments, we draw holiness from G-d upon ourselves, and thereby purify, sanctify, and consecrate our inner world.

Thus is written in the Tanya (Likkutei Amarim - Chapter 46):

"This is what we say 'Who has sanctified us with His commandments' - like a man who betrothes a woman. Exactly so, and infinitely more so, is the union of the Divine soul that engages in Torah and commandments, as well as the vital soul and their aforementioned garments with the Infinite Light blessed be He.

And this is what we say: 'Who has sanctified us with His commandments' - that He has elevated us to the level of the supreme holiness, which is the holiness of the Al-mighty in His very own glory.

And holiness is a term that indicates loftiness, which the Al-mighty is lofty and separated from the worlds and encompasses all the worlds and cannot be en clothed in them, and through the union of the soul and its inclusion in the Infinite Light blessed be He, it indeed attains the level and degree of the holiness of the Ein Sof (the Infinite light) blessed be He, since it unites and integrates with Him blessed be He and they become truly one."

Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel explained ("Betzur Yarum", Part 9 - Chapter 38, Page 81):

"The Baal HaTanya explains that when a Jew performs any physical commandment, through this he clings to the Al-mighty in a complete union just like the union of a man and a woman who are married to each other.

Therefore, just as when a man comes to sanctify a woman he says to her: 'Behold, you are sanctified to me', so too before every commandment we perform we recite: 'Who has sanctified us with His commandments' - to

Parshat Emor - A Complete Commandment

indicate that by performing the commandment we become sanctified and consecrated to the L-rd blessed be He.¹⁸

When a Jew performs a commandment, the commandment connects him to the L-rd blessed be He, and anyone who is connected to the L-rd blessed be He and clings to Him will surely not lack any good, for if he needs healing, the Al-mighty who is 'a compassionate and faithful healer' will heal him, and if he needs salvation from any

distress that befalls him, the Al-mighty who is 'a powerful redeemer' will redeem him from that distress, and if he needs sustenance, the Al-mighty who is 'the sustainer and provider for all' will surely open for him the gates of sustenance and provision abundantly from His full, wide, rich, and open hand."

In any case, we have now learned that the way to illuminate our inner world is by performing the 613 commandments of the Torah.

A Complete Commandment

We have been privileged to write a series on the Shulchan Aruch called "Chelev Ha'aretz", the following is

an excerpt (Volume 2, Page 7):

Rabbi Yaakov Abuchatzzeira in 'Machsof Halavan' writes:¹⁹

...*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

18. In "Hayom Yom" (23rd of Shevat - page 202) the following story is quoted:

Once the saintly Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi came out of his room and heard his wife saying to her friends standing near her: 'Mine says', referring to her husband. (The use of the term 'mine' was out of respect for him, she therefore didn't mention his name).

Rabbi Schneur Zalman fell on the doorpost in meditation and entered into a spiritual state of cleaving to G-d. and said: "I sanctified you with a ring, and by that, I became 'yours',

The Holy One, blessed be He, sanctified us with 613 commandments - surely, even more so are we to be considered 'His'.

Even though we are distant from the Holy One, blessed be He, nevertheless, since we are obligated to fulfill His commandments, we are considered 'His'.

19. In the Torah portion of Lech Lecha on the verse: "And he said... how shall I know that I will inherit it?" (Genesis 15:8), and in the Torah portion of Shelach on the verse: "And see the land" (Numbers 13:18).

Parshat Emor - A Complete Commandment

“A person's attachment to the Shechinah requires sanctity after sanctity, and purity after purity, day after day, each day adding on the previous day, so that through this he can acquire ‘nefesh’, ‘ruach’, and ‘neshamah’, and if he merits even the level of ‘chaya’ which is a soul of the soul and even merit an illumination of the loftiest level of ‘yechida’.

A person may acquire the ‘nefesh’ but not in its completeness, however, if he also engages in good deeds, he acquires the ‘nefesh’ completely, and afterward, in order to attain ‘ruach’, he needs to add sanctity upon sanctity, and effort more than the first, and then he attains the part of the ‘ruach’, and afterward, one of pure hands should add strength to strive to an even greater sanctity, in order to attain the ‘neshamah’, and afterward, effort and additional sanctity to attain ‘chaya’, and illumination from ‘yechida’.”

For the commandments that a person performs to be complete, it is required from him to complete their fulfillment in the aspect of action,

speech, thought, intention, and the feeling of the heart, which are the five conditions for the complete performance of any commandment.

As the saintly Rabbi Shimon Agasi, of blessed memory, wrote in "Bnei Aharon" (a commentary on Shaar HaGilgulim by the Arizal Introduction 11 - Letter 44):

“**In** order for every commandment that a person performs to be perfect, five conditions are necessary: A. Action, B. Speech, C. Intention, D. Thought, E. The feeling of the heart.

To clarify these aspects further one by one:

Action

This is the actual performance of the commandment, such as wearing tzitzit, laying tefillin, sitting in a sukkah, shaking the lulav, and the like.

Speech

This involves reciting the Torah portion related to that commandment, studying its laws in the Mishnah, Talmud, and commentaries, in the manner our Sages have said in the Talmud

Parshat Emor - A Complete Commandment

(Menachot 110a): ‘Rabbi Isaac said, What is written: "This is the law of the sin offering" (Leviticus 6:18), and "This is the law of the guilt offering" (ibid. 7:1), whoever engages in the study of the sin offering is as if he offered a sin offering, and whoever engages in the study of the guilt offering is as if he offered a guilt offering.’

Intention

Intention is in the heart, to feel in one’s heart that he is performing the commandment to fulfill the obligation commanded by our Creator blessed be He, not as one who is merely engaging in the act.

The Arizal seems to hold of the opinion that says: 'The commandments require intention', and without it one has not fulfilled his obligation, as ruled in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim, 60:4. see Beit Yosef 589:8-9). This

is certainly true with regard to the commandments that involve speech, such as: reciting Shema, prayer, counting the Omer, and the like.

Thought

Thought is in the mind, as the Arizal writes (in the beginning of Introduction, Shaar HaMitzvot):

“**Also**, one who performs a commandment, it is not sufficient for him to just perform it, but he must fulfill what our Sages of blessed memory have said to intend during its performance that he is doing it for the sake of G–d, which commanded him regarding this.”

No thought of invalidation should arise in one’s mind for any reason whatsoever, not for the reception of a reward, neither in this world nor in the world to come, but rather to do the will of his Creator who commanded him this.²⁰

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

20. In ‘Sippurei Yesh’ (page 154) the following is written (in the name of the Ben Ish Chai):

We are commanded not to serve the L-rd in order to receive a reward, as Antignos of Socho said (Avot 1:3): “Do not be like servants who serve their master to receive

a reward, but be like servants who serve the master not to receive a reward.”

The intention is that the receipt of the reward should not be the reason for the fulfillment of the commandment, but rather, one should

Parshat Emor - A Complete Commandment

Feeling of the Heart

Feeling of the Heart, as its name implies, is the 'will and the

desire of the heart, and joy', even more than if he had earned thousands of gold and silver,

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

fulfill the commandments because they were given by the Holy One, blessed be He.

The tale is told of Tobiah the judge, who was the head of judges in the king's city.

One day, he was slandered with an evil report, which the king believed, forcing Tobiah to flee without anything, and wandering off to the desert.

He came upon a great river, and there being no bridge or boat to cross the river, he was very distressed and did not know what to do, fearing that the king's officers would catch up with him.

By chance, a farmer who recognized Tobiah the judge passed by.

He did not know that he had fallen from his greatness, rather the farmer had thought that Tobiah wanted to cross the river because the king had assigned him an important mission, and said to Tobiah: 'Please, my lord, sit on my back, and I will carry you across the river, for I am good at swimming.'

Tobiah was very happy with this offer and climbed onto the farmer's back.

Despite Tobiah being very heavy and bulky, the farmer held fast and crossed the wide river.

When they had only a quarter of the distance left to reach dry land, Tobiah said to the farmer: 'If G-d is gracious to me and I return to my position as a judge for the king, I will reward you for the kindness you have shown me.'

Upon hearing this, the farmer asked in astonishment: 'But aren't you the judge now?'

Tobiah replied: 'Evildoers have slandered me, and therefore I am fleeing from the king.'

Upon hearing these words, the farmer thought to himself that there was no reason to carry Tobiah across the river, since he could not be of benefit to him anymore, so why bother carrying him on his back, and he threw Tobiah off his back and into the river.

Clearly, this was a despicable act, and it is evident from the farmer's behavior that he had not considered at all the value of the fulfillment of the commandment to help another, but merely his own personal gain.

Our sages warned us not to follow this path: 'Your service in fulfilling the Torah and its commandments should not be from a motive of reward and gain, because such service is not from love, but from the expectation of reward, and a servant who serves the king for the sake of reward, his service is not complete' (Rabbeinu Bachya on Avot 1:3).

Parshat Emor - A Complete Commandment

because he has merited to fulfill the will of his Creator, and to bring pleasure before Him blessed be He.

When one performs the commandments with these five conditions, his commandment is complete and perfect, and is desired and accepted before G-d.

In this way the part of one's soul that relates to that particular commandment will be rectified in the five aspects of the soul (Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama, Chaya, Yechida).

May we all merit to heed and fulfill the commandments of G-d properly!



Summary and Practical Applications

1. The purpose of creation is to make a dwelling place for the Al-mighty in the lower realms, through mankind continuing and revealing His kingdom in the world.

If only the Divine reality were revealed in the world, it would not be a novelty, for there is truly no other reality. Therefore, the Al-mighty created another visible reality, the reality of impurity.

After the Al-mighty created these two realities, He created the Jew and placed within him two souls, a Divine soul and an animal soul.

The animal soul is naturally drawn to the desires of this world and even to impurity, while the Divine soul is naturally drawn to holiness.

The primary virtue of a person is that he has the power of choice. By choosing good, he fulfills the purpose of creation and builds a dwelling for the Al-mighty in the lower realms.

2. A Jew who merits to follow his Divine soul, and always chooses the path of Torah and commandments,

with all his 248 limbs and 365 sinews, feels G-d's existence, is sanctified, and becomes a dwelling for the Shechinah. He is called 'the complete man' who is worthy of standing and serving before G-d.

3. If G-d forbid, a person spiritually damages one of his limbs, he will not be able to feel in that limb divine light, and is called a 'spiritually blemished' person, distanced from any divine perception.

Thus, anyone who has a blemish in their soul cannot achieve and feel divinity.

4. The way to merit to be a complete person and to achieve completeness and the revelation of the divine light is only through performing the commandments. Through them, we draw holiness from His sanctity upon ourselves, and thereby purify, sanctify, and consecrate our inner world.

When a Jew performs a commandment, he thereby clings to the Al-mighty in a complete union, just like a man and woman in marriage.

Just as when a man comes to sanctify a woman he says to her: 'Behold, you are sanctified to me', so too before every commandment we perform we recite: 'Who has sanctified us with His commandments' - indicating that by performing the commandment we become sanctified and consecrated to G-d.

5. When a Jew performs a commandment, the commandment connects him to G-d.

Anyone who is connected to G-d and clings to Him will surely not lack any good, for if he needs healing, the Al-mighty who is 'a compassionate and faithful healer' will heal him. If he needs redemption from any distress that befalls him, the Al-mighty who is 'a strong redeemer' will redeem him from that distress. If he needs sustenance, the Al-mighty who is 'the sustainer and provider for all' will open for him the gates of sustenance and provision abundantly from His full, wide, rich, and open hand.

The Al-mighty, in His great love, has given us 613 commandments.

However, for the commandments that a person performs to be complete, it is required of him to fulfill them in the aspects of action, speech, intention, thought, and the feeling of the heart, which are the five conditions for the complete performance of any commandment.

Action - This involves the actual performance of the commandment, such as wearing tzitzit, laying tefillin, sitting in a sukkah, taking the lulav, and similar actions.

Speech - This involves reciting the portion related to that commandment, studying its laws in the Mishnah and Gemara, and among the decisors.

Intention - Intention is in the heart, to put it in one's heart at the time of performing it that he is doing it for the sake of the commandment, to fulfill the obligation commanded by our Creator, and not as one who is merely engaging in the act.

Thought - Thought is in the mind, to intend during the performance of the commandment that he is doing it for the sake of the Creator, who commanded regarding this.

Parshat Emor - Summary and Practical Applications

No thought of invalidation should arise in one's mind for any reason, nor any thought of receiving reward, neither in this world nor in the world to come, but rather to do the will of his Creator who commanded him on this.

Feeling of the Heart - feeling of the Heart, as its name implies, is the 'will and the desire of the heart and joy', that one

feels, for having merited to fulfill the will of his Creator, and to bring pleasure before Him, even more than if he had earned thousands of gold and silver coins.

When one performs the commandments with these five conditions, they will be complete and perfect, and desired and accepted before G-d.

Shabbat Shalom !





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New York	7:51 pm	8:57 pm	9:22 pm
Miami	7:43 pm	8:39 pm	9:13 pm
Los Angeles	7:32 pm	8:33 pm	9:03 pm
Montreal	8:03 pm	9:16 pm	9:34 pm
Toronto	8:21 pm	9:31 pm	9:52 pm
London	8:31 pm	9:56 pm	10:03 pm
Jerusalem	7:15 pm	8:01 pm	9:00 pm
Tel Aviv	7:13 pm	8:03 pm	8:57 pm
Haifa	7:13 pm	8:04 pm	8:58 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:11 pm	8:01 pm	8:54 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

A wise father knows to give their love to each child equally without any differences, so that a child will not say 'father doesn't like me, but only my brother'.

This is all the more true with regard to G-d, our Heavenly Father.

Since the Jewish people are all his children, he loves them all in the same manner and without differentiation, regardless of their spiritual state.

We must always remember what our sages have urged us: "Do not look at the jug, but what is inside it" (Avot 4:20).



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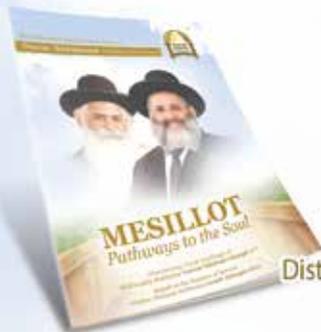
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