

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 155

**Pesach** | Alacrity, Cleanliness, Purity, and Holiness

# 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 ❧...

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Regarding Four Sons . . . . .	1
To Crack the Nut . . . . .	2
Why Specifically on Seder Night? . . . . .	4
His Hand is Stretched Out . . . . .	5
Rabbi Pinchas Ben Yair's Ladder . . . . .	14
On the Tip of the Fork . . . . .	16
Then - and Today . . . . .	18
Four Stages of Growth . . . . .	20
The First Stage - Movement . . . . .	21
Amalek's Goal . . . . .	22
Acquiring Cleanliness Through Understanding . . . . .	24
Acquiring Purity . . . . .	25
Summary and Practical Applications . . . . .	27



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# Pesach - Seder Night

## Regarding Four Sons

**Rabbi** Yitzchak Ginsburgh once explained:<sup>1</sup>

**Who** is most important at the Seder table ? With all due respect to the dear mother who toiled and labored, and with all due respect to the father sitting at the head of the table, and the grandparents who came laden with gifts, and to all the beloved guests - there is no doubt that the stars of the night are the children.

**From** the moment the children begin to understand what is happening, everyone surrounds them, tempting them to stay at the table, trying to interest them in the Passover Haggadah and the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

**The** entire Haggadah is said in response to the sons' question: 'Why is this night different from all other nights.'

**The** Seder night is not the only night when parents and children sit together; every week there is the Friday night Shabbat meal, and in addition, there are the festival nights of Sukkot, Shavuot, and more.

**Yet** despite all this, there is something special about the Seder night that does not exist on other nights - on the Seder night, the Holy Torah commands us to relate and teach to the Four Sons !

**As** we say in the Haggadah: 'The Torah speaks regarding four sons. One is wise, one is wicked, one is simple, and one does not even know how to ask'.

**The** person leading the Seder is not facing a uniform and homogenous group but needs to deal with four different personalities and give each one an answer that suits them.

**Pesach - To Crack the Nut**

**Some** are bothered by the variety of sons and characters and prefer that everyone see everything the same way.

**But** a true parent and educator is not alarmed.

**On** the contrary, he is happy to see that each one captures their own 'color shade.' It is not a good sign if all children and students appear stamped and printed from a photocopying machine.<sup>2</sup>

**To Crack the Nut**

**How** should one relate to each of the sons and all of them together ?

**Firstly**, one must recognize the good points that exist in each one and know that 'in any case, you are called sons' (Responsa of Rashba, Part 1 - Section 194) - no matter how much a Jew may sin and transgress, no matter how far he strays from

the path of Torah and mitzvah and casts off the yoke, no matter how he acts as a foreign son to the Jewish people, he will always remain a son.

**True**, we say to the wicked son, 'If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed,' but after all, he is here with us, and we are assured that 'no

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

**2.** It was the Seder night, the holy sage Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, author of the Bnei Yissaschar, had just finished an impassioned evening prayer, accompanied by soul-stirring songs and melodies.

**The** attendant waited until the rabbi exited and escorted him home.

**Suddenly**, the rabbi turned to the attendant and said, "Let's walk among the Jewish homes in the city and see how they conduct the Seder night" and so they did.

**Passing** by one of the homes, they suddenly heard a loud proclamation: "One!" A few seconds passed and the

cry was repeated: "One!" The rabbi listened, and a tremendous sense of pleasure was visible on his face.

**He** explained to the surprised attendant: "This Jew we heard has just read in the Haggadah the passage: 'The Torah speaks of four sons - one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one who does not know how to ask,' and each time before he said the word 'one,' he thought in his simpleness that this refers to the 'one' G-d that is recited in the Shema prayer, and thus he included the four sons (including the wicked one) in prayer to G-d, akin to the Shema."

**Pesach - To Crack the Nut**

outcast will be cast away from him.' Since G-d brought us close before Mount Sinai and gave us the Torah, no Jew is ever lost.

**Secondly**, one must recognize and identify each son's unique characteristics, see what particularly troubles him, and know the right answer to give him.

**The** diagnosis is relatively simple for three of the sons: the wise one asks a detailed scholarly question, 'What are the testimonies, statutes, and judgments that the L-rd our G-d has commanded you?' The wicked one asks a provocative question, 'What does this service mean to you?' and the simple one asks, 'What is all this?'

**The** expression regarding each 'what does he say' is explained in Chassidut: what he is - he says. Meaning that through his speech, he reveals who he is.

**What** about the fourth son who says nothing, sits and remains silent as if he is not here?

**Do** not give up on him! 'To the one who does not know how to ask, you open up for him.' He is a hard nut to crack, but on Passover, nuts are cherished.

**The** silent son is a mystery to us. Why is he silent?

**Is** it because he does not know how to ask, or perhaps because he does not want to ask?

**Does** he have speech difficulties more so than the simple son, or maybe he simply doesn't relate to us and inwardly thinks similarly to the wicked?

**He** may be silent because he is shy and introverted. This is not good either, for 'the bashful cannot learn.'

**Therefore**, one needs to coax and draw him out until he utters a word, whatever it may be; the main thing is that there is something to hold onto and start a dialogue.

**As** mentioned above, on the Seder night, we explain the principles of our faith to all the different sons - even to the son who is 'hard to crack.'

**Pesach - Why Specifically on Seder Night ?**

**Why Specifically on Seder Night ?**

**We** may stand and wonder:

**The** four sons are entirely different worlds. Each has a different perspective, a different capacity for understanding, and different areas of interest.

**How** does the Torah expect us to explain to each of them in a way that will be absorbed in their minds ?

**Where** can we possibly 'obtain' such expansive spiritual tools that can 'grasp' and 'contain' the different characters yet still manage to find a common language with them ?

**Before** we answer, let's preface:

**For** several weeks now, we have been writing about the inner world of a person and that the essence of a person's life is in his inner world.

**We** will now add another detail:

**As** is known, every Jew has two souls, one is a divine soul, and the other is an animal soul, and in a person's inner world, these two souls dominate.

**When** the animal soul dominates, one's inner world is focused on oneself and one's pleasures, whereas when the divine soul dominates, one experiences divine feelings in their inner world.

**We** must emphasize: The animal soul naturally precedes the divine soul, and is initially revealed in one's inner world, and it is only after a Jew goes through a process of refinement and purification that they merit the palpable influence of the divine soul.

**A** refined Jew who has merited and 'transitioned' from the animal soul to the divine soul, is able to find a common language with every personality.

**Even** though the types of trials different people experience are varied, the underlying feelings and emotions are common, and therefore a Jew who has refined their feelings and emotions - and overcame them successfully, can find a common language with everyone.

**Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out**

**At** the very first time we were privileged to conduct the Seder night, in Egypt 3336 years ago, we underwent an inner refinement.<sup>3</sup>

**So** too, every year since, on the Seder night, we are privileged to refine a core part of

our inner world, and thus have the strength to find a common language with every one of the four sons.

**We** will elaborate upon this below, but as is our custom, we will start with a story...

**His Hand is Stretched Out**

**Rabbi** Mordechai Gerlitz told the following story:<sup>4</sup>

**By** the Holy Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, there was a great stringency that no silver, gold, or copper coins be found within the walls of his home when he went to lie down at night.

**All** those coins that came into his possession during the day had to be distributed to charity by nightfall; otherwise, the tzaddik's sleep would be disturbed, and he would not be able to fall asleep at all.

**There** were instances when the tzaddik had to get off his bed

after he had already laid down and start checking all his vessels in search of a coin that had not yet been given to charity.

**This** is how it was whenever the small amount of time designated for the Tzaddik's sleep would be unsteady.

**His** household members, in such instances, would awaken from their sleep too and immediately know the reason, and they, too, would hurry to join the search in the midst of a regular weekday night.

**Sometimes**, the coin would be found hidden somewhere in a

— *Wellsprings of Wisdom* —

**3. As** the verse states "And Moses called the elders of Israel, and said unto them, draw and take for yourselves a lamb for your families,

and sacrifice the Passover." (Exodus 12:21).

**4. "Emunei Am Segulah"** (Part II - page 103, reproduced with the author's permission).

## Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out

corner, and sometimes in a hole in some pocket, and yet, at times, it turned out that these coins had not reached the Tzaddik's hands at all but were in the hands of a messenger who came to the town in the middle of the night with money intended for the Tzaddik.

**If** the searches throughout the house yielded nothing, someone from the household was sent to check the inns and lodgings in town to search for the messenger who had just arrived, to urge him to hand over the money for the Tzaddik to disperse for charity, immediately.

**At** that hour, someone would run urgently to the home of one of the needy families in the vicinity and throw the money into their house through the window. Only then would the Tzaddik's eyes close, and he would be able to snatch a light nap until a short time later when it was time for him to rise and continue serving the Creator.

**One** night, after a long and exhausting journey from Poland to Galicia, the distinguished chassid, Rabbi Leibish of Shidlovtza, arrived in Lizhensk. It was his custom to appear from time to time, to spend

the Shabbat and a few additional days in the presence of the great Tzaddik and to bask in his light.

**The** winter was in full swing; storms and snow accompanied him all the way, and his journey was sluggish. When he finally reached his destination, it was well after midnight, and only after much pleading did an innkeeper relent, leaving his warm bed and blanket to open the doors of his inn to the chassid and his wagon driver.

**The** sight of the sparkling coin that was pressed into his hand changed the innkeeper's frowning face, who had been annoyed at being disturbed and losing sleep, and his face lit up instantly.

**He** hurried to wake up his servant, and ordered him to take the horses and the wagon into the barn, while he headed toward the kitchen to prepare a proper meal for the guests.

**However**, the two guests, exhausted and weary, forsook the meal and asked instead for a room to sleep.

**The** wagon driver immediately headed towards the bed and fell



**Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out**

into a deep sleep, while the chassid turned to a corner, and began his evening prayers quietly, which he hadn't had the ability to say earlier amidst the distraction of the traveling wagon.

**With** him in his luggage, Rabbi Leibish carried a large bundle of 'petitions,' given to him by dozens of chassidim from Poland, to deliver to the Tzaddik of Lizhensk. Each petition was accompanied by a sum of money for the 'redemption of the soul'.

**The** amount of money Rabbi Leibish had brought for the Tzaddik was quite substantial and considerable.

**In** the Tzaddik Rabbi Elimelech's home, there was considerable commotion at that hour.

**It** had been a while that the Tzaddik tried to fall asleep, but without success.

**Naturally,** he immediately began searching for charity money. All the household members, from the oldest to the youngest, were busy in a thorough and meticulous search for silver coins, which may have remained

in the house, unknowingly, and had not yet been given to charity.

**However,** this time, despite all efforts, not even a single coin was found throughout the entire house.

**Without** any choice, despite the severe cold that reigned outside, one of the sons volunteered and went out to search the inns and lodgings for a guest who had just arrived and might have brought with him money for the tzaddik's dispersal.

**Fortunately,** his search did not take too long, as his feet led him directly to that inn where Rabbi Leibish from Shidlovtza had taken shelter. As he passed through the courtyard, he noticed the light from the barn, and the Tzaddik's son knew that indeed, a guest had recently arrived, and his horses were now being fed.

**The** Tzaddik's son knocked on the inn's doors, and the innkeeper, who was already awake, did not hesitate to open for him.

**Hearing** his inquiry, he replied that the guest who had come under his roof indeed came

Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out

to town seeking the Tzaddik. He was easily recognized as a veteran chassid, since he had not turned to eat or sleep, but rather to prayer and study.

**The** Tzaddik's son entered the inn and met Rabbi Leibish, who had just finished his prayers, and they were both overjoyed to see each other.

"**Did** you come to bring funds to my father?" asked the Tzaddik's son.

"**Absolutely!**" replied Rabbi Leibish, immediately understanding the matter at hand.

**He** clasped his head with both hands and exclaimed:

"**Woe** is to me, for causing our holy Rabbi to lose sleep! But what could I have done?" - the chassid moved to an apologetic tone - "Should I have possibly come and disturbed our Rabbi in the middle of the night?!"

**Saying** this, Rabbi Leibish took out the bundle of petitions and redemptions from his luggage and hurriedly ran with the Rabbi's son towards the tzaddik's dwelling.

**The** short hours that were allotted for the Tzaddik's sleep had already passed. He was now sitting and engaging in his holy work of Torah and prayer.

**The** Tzaddik warmly welcomed his guest, took the petitions handed over by him, and the large sums of money, handed it to his son to completely disperse and distribute among needy families.

**As** the chassid prepared to leave the Tzaddik's presence and return to his inn, the Tzaddik called him back and asked: "You came with a Jewish wagon driver, did you not?"

"**Indeed!**" replied Rabbi Leibish.

"**Please** send him to me immediately!" requested the Tzaddik - "and tell him that I invite him to come now to my home!"

**As** soon as the chassid left the Tzaddik's presence, these last words of the Tzaddik started echoing in his head like a hammer.

"**To** send the wagon driver to the Tzaddik?" Rabbi Leibish pondered. "Is he a small child that I

**Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out**

can just send? Will he even listen to me? This man is coarse and crude, lowly and despised, and if not for the harsh weather and the refusal of other drivers to embark on such a journey, I would not have even dared to associate with him!"

**"How** can I awaken him from his deep sleep, and command him in the middle of a cold and freezing winter night, after such a long and exhausting journey, to kindly go to the Tzaddik's house, even if I pay him well for it, I'm certain he won't agree to go!".

**As** he was thinking this over, he arrived back at the inn.

**His** devotion and his faith in the Tzaddikim overcame his hesitations, and he approached the wagon driver's bed, grabbed his hand, and shook him vigorously.

**The** wagon driver, swatting his hand away as if swatting a bothersome fly in his sleep, turned over to the other side, emitting a groan of annoyance.

**Yet,** the chassid did not despair. With persistence and

faith, he shook and rocked and shook again, not letting the driver, who was deep in sleep, rest, until he opened his eyes.

**"What** do you want from me?" the driver snapped, "Why won't you let me sleep?" his gruff voice echoed in the stillness of the inn, like the roar of a lion in the thicket.

**"The** Tzaddik calls for you!" Rabbi Leibish murmured, his voice trembling with fear. "The Tzaddik invites you to come immediately to his dwelling!"

**"Have** you gone mad, Rabbi?!" the driver sat up on his bed in a fury. "Have you lost your mind?! For this you woke me in the dead of night, after such a grueling journey? What are you even thinking?!"

**In** the darkness of the inn, Rabbi Leibish saw, to his horror, that the driver was feeling around him, looking for something to hurl at him in rage.

**Rabbi** Leibish quickly moved aside, keeping a safe distance and waiting for his anger to pass.

**Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out**

**The** driver settled back into his blanket, and Rabbi Leibish sighed in relief, he dared not to further provoke the lion's wrath.

"**I** have done my duty!" Rabbi Leibish consoled himself in his heart. "I have delivered the tzaddik's invitation as I was commanded, and I have done my part!"

**A** short while passed, and the driver's grumbling was heard again in his slumber:

"**What** does he want from me, this tzaddik? What do I have to do with him?! What business does he have with me?! And all this must happen in the middle of the night! Is the matter so urgent that he has to propose to me that it can't wait until morning?"

**He** thundered with a terrifying voice. "Where is the Rabbi who dared wake me from my sleep for such nonsense? I will tear him like a fish!"

**Rabbi** Leibish trembled in his bed, yet shortly after, silence reigned again, and the driver fell back asleep.

**A** few moments passed, and the driver began again tossing and turning in his bed.

**It** seemed that sleep had escaped him, and he couldn't find rest, the Tzaddik's invitation gnawed at him and burned in his bones, and he couldn't fall asleep.

"**What** wrong have I done to this tzaddik?" his mutterings resumed. "How does he even know me? I've never seen him, and he's never seen me. What hidden secret does he wish to reveal to me?!"

**Once** again, the driver suddenly became enraged and railed against the chassid who had awakened him. Again, he tried to fall asleep - and failed.

**The** chassid wondered to himself, whether he had succeeded in his mission or not.

**He** surmised that the Tzaddik's words would not return void. He believed that eventually, the wagon driver's stubborn heart would yield, and he would rise and go to the Tzaddik's dwelling as he was invited.

**Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out**

"**I** would have already gone to this Tzaddik, and be done with it!" the driver suddenly declared loudly. "But who will show me his house now, in the middle of the dark freezing night? I've never been in this town before, and I don't know where he lives!"

"**If** you truly wish to go to the Tzaddik," Rabbi Leibish mustered the courage and replied to him, "you can easily find his house. The town is not large at all, and once you step onto the street, you'll immediately notice the one house from which light emanates at this hour of the night. Only the Tzaddik's house is lit at this hour, for he is currently engaged in Torah study and divine service."

"**Fine**, I'll go, do I have a choice? You've already ruined my night anyway!"

**Seeing** that the driver was indeed intending to go, Rabbi Leibish got up from his bed, went out with him into the freezing cold, and keeping a safe distance, he pointed with his finger in the direction and reminded him of

the single illuminated house among the sleepy town.

**As** soon as the driver's foot stepped on the threshold of the Tzaddik's house, a torrent of rebuke welcomed him:

"**Woe** to you, wicked man like yourself! Do you think you live in a lawless world? Can you sin, transgress, and rebel as you please?! Is there no judge and no judgment?!"

**The** driver was struck with shock, standing frozen on the spot without moving a limb.

**After** a few moments, he gathered some of his remaining insolence and began to retort boldly:

"**What** sin? What transgression? What are these crimes and offenses you speak of?! Why are you attacking me, and what do you really want from me at all?!"

"**Really**, do you need a detailed account?" the tzaddik countered sternly. "I am ready and prepared; please correct me if I err in any way!"

**Here**, the tzaddik began to list in his ears a litany of sins,

**Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out**

transgressions, and offenses, increasingly severe, that the driver had committed, so much so that they had become second nature to him.

**As** the tzaddik elaborated, the driver's erect and defiant posture wilted, his appearance grew pale until he burst into heart-wrenching tears and felt faint.

**The** tzaddik chided him after reviving him. "Repent, and you shall be forgiven!"

**"Repentance?** Who can accept repentance from a serial sinner and transgressor like me?!" the driver replied weakly and mockingly. "It's been thirteen years that all those sins, which the tzaddik has just enumerated, and many more, have become my daily bread! How can I possibly repent for such a vast 'sea' of sins and transgressions?!"

**"It** is possible, and very much so!" the tzaddik declared confidently. "If you accept upon yourself the path of repentance that I will show you, I assure you - and I guarantee - that your repentance will be

accepted before the Throne of Glory!"

**After** a few moments of silence, the driver answered, his voice broken but resolute:

**"Speak** up, Rabbi! I will listen to what you say and will do it!"

**"Here** is what you shall do," the tzaddik began. "Sell your horses and your wagon, and the money you receive, plus any other cash you have with you, send through the Jew you came with to your family, so they may have sustenance.

**Do** not return to your home or even to your country, but go straight from here to any city you choose in Galicia, and settle there in a synagogue for three consecutive years!"

**The** wagon driver nodded his head, determined to follow the tzaddik's words without hesitation or deviation. After the tzaddik saw this expression of resolve, he detailed the plan for his further repentance:

**"Day** and night, sit in the synagogue, engage in prayer and repentance, and it shall be your

**Pesach - His Hand is Stretched Out**

home and inheritance ! If someone takes pity on you and invites you to eat at their table – go and eat. If someone gives you food or money – take it and satisfy your hunger.

**However**, you must not extend your hand to ask for anything from anyone. Only accept what the Creator, through His divine providence, provides for you.

**After** three full years have passed, return to me here, and then, with the help of Heaven, I will guide you further as to what you should do !"

**The** driver did not delay in doing exactly as the Tzaddik had instructed.

**Meanwhile**, Rabbi Leibish sought another wagon and driver and returned home to Shidlovtza, Poland.

**Three** years later, the wagon driver appeared once again before the Tzaddik in Lizhensk, and he was no longer the same person.

**No** longer was he the coarse and crude individual who only dressed outwardly as a Jew.

**This** time, he was a refined and gentle Jew, with radiant features, and whose appearance testified that he belonged among those who sit in the synagogue, whose world consists solely of Torah study and service to G-d.

**The** Tzaddik welcomed him with joy and affection, listened to all he had undergone during those three years of repentance, and lifted his eyes heavenward exclaiming in joy and tremor:

**"Blessed** is the L-rd who desires repentance, whose hand is stretched out to accept those who return, who raises from the dust to seat among the princes of His people ! Fortunate are you that you have merited to return in complete and exalted repentance, to the L-rd your G-d !"

**Until** the day of his death, the penitent remained close to the Tzaddik in Lizhensk.

**There** he settled, together with his family from Poland, and became known as an exceptional chassid, scholar and a G-d-fearing man, who never departed from the tent of Torah.

## Pesach - Rabbi Pinchas Ben Yair's Ladder

**And** so, what the driver managed to amass in sins and transgressions in the course of 13 years, leading his soul to the depths of the abyss, by some merit that brought him to Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, he repaired and fixed through the path of repentance.

**The** driver committed to the "the path of repentance" he received with steadfastness and dedication, and ultimately, the "light of Torah" illuminated within him.

### Rabbi Pinchas Ben Yair's Ladder

**Before** the driver began the process of repentance, he roamed in an external world, a strange and alien world where he obtained what he wanted through aggression and violence.

**Given** that he lived in such a lowly world, it's understandable why he pursued the pleasures and delights of this world, for that is what was available, and without them, he had no vitality or pleasure.

**However,** Rabbi Elimelech saw with his holy inspiration that this was not the true him; it did not suit his inner character.

**The** intention of this story is not to suggest that people now embark on a journey of exile, the instruction Rabbi Elimelech gave to the driver was a personal directive, tailored to him according to the root of his soul.

**As** for us - who have not been privileged to receive such a personal directive - we must follow the ways of the luminaries and great leaders of the generation...

Rabbi Elimelech saw that deep within his heart, there existed an inner world, bright and full of life, that could fill the heart with true joy and pure happiness.

**Rabbi** Elimelech looked at him and was filled with compassion, and he understood that the driver had a problem; he simply did not know how to open the door and enter into his own inner world.

**Therefore,** he decided to help him and with a bit of awakening, he succeeded in arousing in his heart the desire and longing to break through the barriers, "You



Pesach - Rabbi Pinchas Ben Yair's Ladder

brought my soul out of prison" (Psalms 142:7), and sent him on an accelerated 'course' to open the gates of the inner spiritual world.

**We**, who read the story, are filled with excitement and immediately desire to enter our inner world as well. 'We are drawn in and stand before a grand and adorned gate, knocking and pleading: 'Please, open up the gate for us'.<sup>5</sup>

**And** like a rolling echo, the answer is heard: 'You are still not worthy!'.<sup>6</sup>

**A** salty tear lingers at the corner of our eye, and we resolutely search for a way. 'How do we get it done, how can we open the gate?'

**Indeed**, we find a sure method that has been paved by Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair, and whoever merits to walk in the path he charted will surely enter these grand gates of one's inner world.

**Before** we describe and detail this path, we must add an important detail:

**We** live in a physical world, where concepts are vastly different and distinct from the way they exist in the inner spiritual world.

**In** our physical world success is marked by achievement - as long as we have not achieved the goal, we are considered a failure, a lack of success.

**In** the spiritual world however, this is quite different. In spiritual terms, every tiny step is perfection. Every holy thought, pure speech, and righteous act - even the smallest - has great and awesome importance.

**Every** small advancement - is called progress!

**This** is especially true regarding the long and arduous path delineated by Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair - every small step has

— *Wellsprings of Wisdom* —

5. "Open for me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and praise the L-rd." (Psalms 118:19).

6. "This is the gate of the L-rd, into which the righteous shall enter." (Psalms 118:20).

**Pesach - On the Tip of the Fork**

its virtue, and every centimeter has its importance.

**The** path set forth by Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair includes the following spiritual levels and traits in order of progression

(Jerusalem Talmud, Shekalim 3:3):  
zeal, cleanliness, purity, holiness, humility, fear of G-d, piety, divine spirit, resurrection of the dead, and finally Elijah the prophet.

**On the Tip of the Fork**

**From** the time Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair paved the way, many centuries passed until the year 5067, when the soul of the G-dly man, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (the Ramchal), descended to this world.<sup>7</sup>

**From** the beginning of his path, he purified and sanctified himself, engaging deeply in the holy Torah.

**By** the age of 14, he was proficient in all areas of the

Torah: Talmud, Halacha, Zohar, and the writings of the Arizal, and by the age of 19 (in the year 5086), he was ordained for the rabbinate.

**A** year later, at the age of 20, the Ramchal received his first spiritual revelation,<sup>8</sup> and from then on, his spiritual stature grew immensely.

**By** divine instruction, he began to write down all the secrets revealed to him, and in

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

7. See at length "Ohr Haganuz... Shel HaRamchal" by Rabbi Mordechai Shriki.

**8. The** Ramchal himself shared this experience (Igrot Ramchal - Letter 15):

**"To** summarize the tale briefly.

**On** the first day of Sivan, 5487, while I was engaging in a particular meditation, I fell asleep and upon waking, I heard a voice of an angel saying, 'I have descended to reveal to you the hidden secrets of the Holy King.'

I stood trembling for a moment, and then gathered strength. The voice did not cease, and it revealed a hidden secret.

**On** the second day at the same time, I tried to be alone in a room, and the voice returned and disclosed another hidden secret. One day, it revealed to me that it was a messenger sent from Heaven and gave me specific meditations to perform every day, and then it would come, and I would not see him but hear his voice

**Pesach - On the Tip of the Fork**

just seven years, he authored more than 70 books on the hidden wisdoms of the Torah.

**As** could be expected, when some of the scholars of his generation heard this, they decided he was delusional and must be opposed with all their might, and they began to tarnish his name and fight against him vigorously.

**Some** rabbis tried to quell the dispute, but were told in response:

**In** past generations, people were ignorant, and fought against the righteous, but we truly know

what we are doing; we are fighting against a great evil, and all our actions are for the sake of Heaven, to bring joy to the L-rd, as it is said: "When the wicked perish, there is jubilation" (Proverbs 11:10).'

**All** attempts at reconciliation failed, and those warring 'rabbis' declared upon the Ramchal excommunication - a deep hatred burned in their souls - and eventually took his books to be burned and buried in Frankfurt.<sup>9</sup>

**This** event occurred when the Ramchal was 30 years old. Three years later, at the age of

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

---

speaking from within me. Later, it granted me permission to ask questions as well.

**After** three months, it gave me specific spiritual rectifications to perform every day, to merit the revelation of Elijah the Prophet.

**Then** it commanded me to write a book on Ecclesiastes, and it explained to me the inner meaning of each verse.

**Then** Elijah the Prophet came and told me several secrets, and said that the great divine illumination called 'Matat' would appear. When it appeared, I knew who it was, because of what Elijah had told me, and from then on, I recognized each of them.

**There** are also souls that reveal themselves to me, whose names I do not know.

**I** write the novelties they say, and today I write while one is with me.

**All** these things I do while bowing on my face, and I see these holy souls, in human form, as if in a dream."

**9. Rabbi** Yoram Michael Abargel told me:

**One** day, Rabbi Yosef Woltuch met me and said:

**Rabbi** Yoram, pray that the fierce opponents of the Ramchal finally find rest. It's been three hundred years since

**Pesach - Then - and Today**

33, he wrote his monumental work called 'Mesilat Yesharim'.

**When** this book was compiled, the method of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair was finally clarified.

'**Mesilat** Yesharim' is entirely based on the above teaching of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair,

elaborating at length on the path - how to proceed to one's inner world and how to merit the inspiration of the Divine Presence within our hearts, and one would do well to study it properly.<sup>10</sup>

**Here** however, we wish to add something additional on the subject.

**Then - and Today**

**We** have already said that spiritual concepts differ and are distinct from their physical

counterparts. We have already written about one such difference, and now we will cite another:

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

their passing, and they still roam the chaotic worlds of Tohu, subject to cruel and vicious destructive angels !'

**10. The** great scholars of Israel were astounded by the greatness of this book, and said that the Ramchal managed to condense his entire Kabbalistic system within it !

**Rabbi** Yerucham of Mir explained (Da'at Chochmah u'Mussar, Volume I - page 249):

"**The** entire 'Mesilat Yesharim', is built on the foundation of purging evil, from its opening to the chapter of holiness, which is ultimate purity, and not even a trace of evil remains.

**All** the levels listed there, from zeal, cleanliness, and purity to holiness - are all a step by step process in purification and refinement of the soul from any trace of evil.

**Parenthetically**, one who pays close attention, will see that 'Mesilat Yesharim' is a comprehensive book that includes in it all the other books he wrote, and sometimes an entire volume is included in just a few lines.

**If** he had written his book in the terminology of Kabbalah, some might have thought that the book and its subjects are distant and removed Kabbalistic matters.

'**Mesilat** Yesharim' instead clarified subjects and made them closer to our understanding, and by studying it, we have a connection to it.

**Indeed**, 'purging evil' is from the secrets of creation, around which the secrets of creation revolve."

**Until** now, it has been explained that to merit the revelation of divinity within us, we must walk the path that ascends to G-dliness, which is composed of five elements: zeal, cleanliness, purity, holiness, humility.

**When** we contemplate this with our physical eyes, we may sigh and say: What a long path, who knows how many years it will take us!

**This** is because when we observe the physical reality visible to our eyes, we perceive only the dimension that can be sensed by our senses.

**However,** if we are fortunate and a prism to spiritual reality is opened for us, we discover the spiritual dimensions that create and complete reality, one of them being the dimension of 'the holidays of the year'.

**As** Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel said (Imrei Noam, Yitro - Article B):

**In** the inner dimensions of the Torah, it is explained that every year, when a Jewish festival arrives, including the rabbinical festivals of Chanukah and Purim,

those same illuminations and great lights that shone in the world the first time the festival occurred, return and shine again in the world, with an even greater intensity.

**For** example, every year on Passover, the divine illumination of the Exodus from Egypt and the miracles associated with it shine in the world, on Sukkot the illumination of the Clouds of Glory that surrounded the Israelites in the desert, on Shavuot the illumination of Mount Sinai and the giving of the Torah, and similarly with the other festivals.

**This** is hinted at in what is said in the Book of Esther: "And these days are remembered and fulfilled throughout every generation" (Esther 9:28), meaning that the same divine lights that illuminated in the world during those days when the events first occurred, are remembered, and consequently shine in every generation and every year when these events arrive.

**Thus,** at the festivals of Purim, Passover, Shavuot, one can already merit the lofty

**Pesach - Four Stages of Growth**

spiritual levels that form the path of Rabbi Pinchas Ben Yair.

**In** more detail:

**On** Purim, one merits alacrity, In the thirty days between Purim and Passover,

one merits cleanliness, On the night of the Seder and the days following, one merits purity, And finally on the festival of Shavuot, the fourth level of sanctity reigns.

**Let** us start from the beginning.

**Four Stages of Growth**

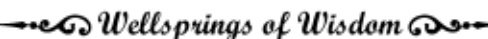
**The** existence of a person begins in the mother's womb. The Talmud describes how the fetus appears while it is in its mother's womb, as stated there (Niddah 30b):

**"Rabbi** Simlai expounded: What is the fetus like when it is in its mother's womb? Like a folded tablet, its hands rest on its temples, its elbows on its thighs, its heels against its buttocks, and its head lies between its knees; its mouth is closed, and its navel is open. It eats what its mother eats, drinks what its mother drinks, but does not excrete waste lest it harm its mother. When it emerges into the air of the world, the mouth that was closed opens and the navel that was open closes, otherwise, it could not live even one hour."

**During** this first period, only the most basic layer of life, the essence of mere existence, appears. The inner character is not discernable, nor can it be seen with the naked eye. There's no manifestation of emotions, certainly not of thoughts and the more complex nature,<sup>11</sup> and nothing substantial is expressed during this time.

**It** is after the person is born into the air of the world, that the soul transitions to a more revealed state, and the differences between people start to become apparent.

**As** the child grows, so does his animal soul reveal itself more articulately within his inner world.



**11.** 'Mavo L'Kabbalat Ha'Ari' - page 98, by Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh.

Pesach - The First Stage - Movement

**When** the animal soul reveals itself in its full force and intensity, the strongest internal feeling that is experienced by a person is the feeling of emptiness.

**Within** himself, the person feels that there exists an empty space, a black hole, that pulls at his being.<sup>12</sup>

**It** is this feeling of lack that causes him to desire fulfillment, and if he does not succeed to find true fulfillment, he goes on to seek 'fulfillment' in the pleasures of this world.

**But** as is well known, this does not help at all, and the feeling of 'lack' continues 'to breathe' down his neck.

**Then** comes a fourth stage, when the divine soul begins to broadcast vital signs into one's inner world, and this is when a person starts on the 'path' of correction, which consists of four main stages: movement, explanation, feeling, and adherence.

**We** shall start first with 'movement'.

**The First Stage - Movement**

'**Mesilat Yesharim**' (Chapter 7) describes the inner world of a person when the animal soul reveals itself in full force and takes leadership of the person, in the following way: 'Even the movement of his spirit will sink and extinguish'.

Meaning:

**Such** a person, when an unholy desire awakens within

him, he gets up and acts, without differentiating whether the action is permitted or not.

**For** example: When he passes by a restaurant and wants to eat, he enters and sits down to eat without paying attention whether it has a kosher certificate or not.

**If** in those moments of decision 'to sit down and eat', no struggle is

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

**12. Despite** a person feeling this way, he thinks to himself: This is who I am, and that's it!

**Whoever** wants, can accept me as I am, whoever doesn't - can take a hike.

**Pesach - Amalek's Goal - 'Today is Lost, Postpone to Tomorrow'**

waged within him between the two souls, if at that moment he does not feel the strength of the battle, and his heart does not flutter with fear, it is a sure sign that the movement of his G-dly spirit has sunk and extinguished.

**Therefore**, the first stage to enter the 'path' of divine revelation is acquiring alacrity, to create 'movement' within one's inner world that is bound

and tied by desires, and one must begin the war of independence, a war for the revelation of the divine soul within.<sup>13</sup>

**In** this war, the struggle is felt in full force, both souls battling each other.

**This** war itself - even if ultimately ended in failure - is a great advancement.

**This** first stage is called alacrity, or in other words, 'movement'.

**Amalek's Goal - 'Today is Lost, Postpone to Tomorrow'**

**As** is known, the bitter enemy of the Jewish people is Amalek.

**Our** sages revealed to us that Amalek's war against the Jewish people was to remove from them the trait of alacrity.

**In** other words:

**The** essence of the impurity of Amalek is laziness.

**Amalek** is a dreadful impurity that says to a person: 'Everything you can, do tomorrow - not today!'

**Therefore**, the victory in battle against Haman the Agagite,

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

**13. Thus** it is defined by 'Mesilat Yesharim':

"**One's** movement should be as swift as the movement of fire, and not rest until he has completed the task.

**Indeed**, consider further that just as zeal

is born from internal fervor, so too does zeal give birth to fervor. Someone who feels himself awakened with excitement in the act of a commandment with external movement, causes his internal movement to likewise strengthen, and the desire and eagerness in him to grow."



of the seed of Amalek, was mainly through the trait of alacrity.

**In** the words of Rabbi Dov Pinck:<sup>14</sup>

**Ahasuerus** turned to Esther and asked her, "What is your wish, and it shall be granted to you, and what is your request, up to half of the kingdom, it shall be" (Esther 5:6).

**Esther** replied, "If I have found favor in the eyes of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and to fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said" (ibid. verse 8).

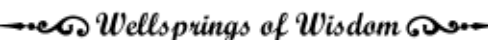
**The** Midrash asks (Yalkut Shimoni, Esther - 1,056), why did Esther delay and invite Ahasuerus 'tomorrow'? This was because all the offspring of Amalek are most susceptible to fall 'tomorrow', as it says: "Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the G-dly staff in my hand'" (Exodus 17:9).

**The** explanation of the above passage is that the entire essence of the impurity of Amalek is procrastination, to postpone everything to 'tomorrow', and when one is aroused to fulfill a commandment or someone asks him for a favor, he puts him off with the excuse that 'tomorrow I will do it'.

**This** is the impurity that is said of Amalek "they met you" (Deuteronomy 25:18) ("אשר קרד") which also means "they cooled you", since he has the trait that responds to everything with the delay of - "tomorrow not today."

**The** opposite of this is the trait of alacrity, which arouses one to perform good deeds promptly and with alacrity when still enthusiastic about doing it.

**Therefore**, the entire miracle of the Megillah was done in a manner of alacrity, as in the verse: "The king said, 'Hurry and bring Haman'" (Esther 5:5), "Hurry, take the apparel and the horse" (ibid. 6:10), "The riders on the royal



14. "Divrei Shalom V'emet" - The Book of Esther (page 139).

**Pesach - Acquiring Cleanliness Through Understanding**

horses went out, hastened and pressed on" (ibid. 8:14).

**This** is because alacrity nullifies the impurity of Amalek, whose desire is the opposite, to postpone everything to 'tomorrow'.

**With** this, we also can understand the words of the Midrash that the entire downfall

of Haman and Amalek is always referred to as 'tomorrow'.

**Thus**, on Purim day, we subdue the impurity of Amalek and receive from the holiness and acquire the trait of alacrity into our soul.

**We** then can advance to the next stage: explanation.

**Acquiring Cleanliness Through Understanding**

**After** a person has merited to start feeling a movement of life within him, and is already capable of feeling the battle between the heart that desires G-dliness and the heart that craves, he is then ready to progress to the next stage - cleanliness.

'**Mesilat** Yesharim' (Chapter 10) explains cleanliness as follows:

**'The** trait of cleanliness is being completely clean of any bad trait and any sin.'

**The** way to acquire the trait of cleanliness is through - "And you shall know this day and consider it in your heart" (Deuteronomy 4:39).

**One** who wishes to cleanse himself from any bad trait must explain to himself the worthlessness of the trait, and on the other hand, the greatness of the rectified trait.<sup>15</sup>

**To** expand on this:

**As** explained, every Jew has two souls, an animal soul and a divine soul. There are several differences

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

**15. To** quote from 'Mesilat Yesharim' (Chapter 12):

**The** true means to acquire cleanliness is the constant reading of the words of our sages, whether it be the particular

laws or the ethical teachings.

**It** is therefore essential to have a thorough knowledge of the Torah laws and to know the full extent of the details of the commandments.

**Pesach - Acquiring Purity**

between them, one of the prominent differences between them is in the realm of understanding:

**While** the divine soul understands spiritual ideas and terminology, the animal soul does not understand any of this.

**The** animal soul only understands concepts that are tangible to it. Therefore, when we want to explain to the animal soul why it should 'behave' well, we must explain it in words that it can understand.

**Our** sages revealed to us that in the thirty days between Purim

and Passover, there is divine assistance for a person to find words of explanation.

**This** is hinted at in the words of the Tur (Orach Chaim, section 429): 'One should inquire and expound on the laws of Passover thirty days before the festival' - interpreted to mean that during these days, there is heavenly assistance for explaining ('inquiring and expounding' in a way that would be understood even by the animal soul).

**Finally**, at the end of these days, we progress to the next stage, acquiring purity.

**Acquiring Purity**

**After** cleanliness, comes the stage of purity, which is about feeling.

**It** is when a person feels and senses that he is actually standing before G-d.

**This** feeling causes him to direct all his actions, words, and thoughts solely towards G-d, "to the L-rd alone" (Exodus 22:19).

**In** the words of the 'Mesilat Yesharim' (Chapter 16):

**The** complete divine service suitable for all true seekers of G-d, is when this service can be called completely pure service, where the orientation is solely towards G-d, and not any other considerations.

**On** the night of the Seder, a Jew who has merited alacrity and cleanliness receives such an immense light that he feels the presence of the Creator, and this sensation eliminates all material desire of this world from him.

**Pesach - Acquiring Purity**

**Moreover**, this great light opens the pathways of the heart, and the person is able to express clear words, words that are understandable to each of the various children.

**Although** we merit 'purity' on the night of the Seder, it still does not become a part of us. For this, we also need fifty days of counting the Omer.

To elaborate:

**On** the night of the Seder, an immense, boundless divine light descends, but immediately at dawn, it is retracted back to Heaven.

**Our** task during the days of counting is to strive to reacquire this light through our own effort (not as a heavenly gift), through continuous work day after day during the 49 days of the counting of the Omer.

**One** may ask: Since this light is retracted from us, why is it given to us in the first place on the night of the Seder?

**A** similar question can be asked about what our sages said in the Talmud (Niddah 30b), that while

the fetus is in its mother's womb, a candle burns above its head and it can see from one end of the world to the other, and an angel teaches it the entire Torah. But just before it comes into the world, an angel strikes it on its mouth and it forgets all the Torah, so that it will strive to learn it on its own. Seemingly why teach it in the first place, if ultimately the fetus forgets everything it was taught?

**The** commentators explain that the angel teaches the fetus the entire Torah so that when it comes to learn the Torah again during its lifetime, it will not be like learning something new, which is difficult, but rather like reviewing something it had learned before.

**Similarly**, regarding our work during the days of the Omer:

**If** we had to acquire a new divine light through our efforts during the days of the Omer, it would have been extremely difficult to attain.

**Therefore**, G-d, in His mercy, gives us this light as a gift on the night of the Seder, even though He then takes it back, and

**Pesach - Summary and Practical Applications**

from then on, all that is required of us is to reacquire the light that was once ours, which is more easily achievable.

**Finally**, after the days of the Omer, we merit the fourth stage on Shavuot, which is ‘sanctity’, whose essence is adherence.

**This** means: A person's existence connects constantly to G-d, and his reality is one with G-d's!

**May** G-d grant us, on this night of the Seder, the greatness of understanding and the clarity of feeling!

**Shabbat Shalom!**

**Summary and Practical Applications**

**A.** The path of elevation for every person involves four stages: zeal, cleanliness, purity, and holiness. Which in other terms is: movement, explanation, feeling, and adherence. Only when a person goes through these stages in this order does he merit completeness.

**B.** Although this process requires investment and progress step by step, our sages reveal another possibility for a person to prepare his soul and enter this path of divine revelation.

**C.** Every year, when a festival arrives, the illuminations and lights that shone in the world during the first occurrence of this festival return and shine in the world again. Since alacrity is illuminated during Purim, cleanliness in the thirty days between Purim and Passover, purity during the night of the Seder and the days following it, and holiness during the festival of

Shavuot, these days are opportune times to merit these illuminations.

**D.** On Purim, we subdue Amalek, whose entire essence was to extinguish the flame of the Jewish soul. Therefore, the entire miracle of the Megillah happened in a manner of alacrity, as explained in the Book of Esther, because alacrity nullifies the impurity of Amalek, whose guiding principle is the opposite, to postpone everything for 'tomorrow'.

**E.** The thirty days between Purim and Passover are meritorious for purification because, during them, G-d 'cleanses' the souls of the people of Israel. In these days, a person can merit to be cleansed from every bad trait and sin.

**F.** The work we are tasked with during these 30 days is to fulfill the verse: "And you shall know this day, and consider it in

## Pesach - Summary and Practical Applications

your heart." This is done by explaining to oneself the worthlessness of bad traits (each in their own particular way), and on the other hand, the greatness of the corrected trait. The manner of explanation should be simple and in clear words that even one's 'animal soul' can understand.

**G.** On the night of the Seder, we progress to the next stage - purity. This is about feeling, when a person feels and senses that he is (actually) standing before G-d. This feeling causes him to focus all his actions, words, and thoughts solely on G-d.

**On** the night of the Seder, a Jew who has merited alacrity and cleanliness receives such a tremendous light that he feels the presence of the Creator, and this sensation eliminates all physical desire of this world from him. Moreover, this great light opens the pathways of the heart, and the person manages to express clear words that are understandable to each of the four types of sons.

**H.** However, even though we merit the great light of purity on the night of the Seder, it does not become a part of us. For this, we also need fifty days of counting the Omer.

**The** reason we need fifty days is that on the night of the Seder, the tremendous light that descends is immediately retracted back to Heaven at dawn.

**Our** task during the days of the counting of the Omer is to strive to reacquire this light by our own efforts

through continuous work day after day during the 49 days of the counting.

**I.** Finally, the stage of holiness - after the days of counting, we merit the fourth stage of 'holiness' on the festival of Shavuot, whose essence is adherence. This means: the person's existence is constantly connected to G-d, and he and the spiritual reality are one !

**J.** We conclude with a small but important detail: The concepts of the world in which we live are fundamentally different from the concepts that exist in the inner spiritual world.

**For** example, in the physical world, as long as we have not reached the goal, we are considered a failure and a lack of success.

**But** in the spiritual world, everything is different. Every small step is completeness !

**Every** holy thought, pure speech, and pure action - even the smallest - already has great and tremendous importance.

**Every** small progress that is made - especially in this path delineated by 'Mesilat Yesharim', which is a long and exhausting journey - every centimeter has value and importance !

**Fortunate** is the one who always continues and progresses, at all times.

**May** G-d grant us, on this night of the Seder, the greatness of understanding and the clarity of feeling !



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# Shabbat Times Pesach

19<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, 5784



| City        | Candle Lighting | Shabbat Ends | Rabbeinu Tam |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| New York    | 7:29 pm         | 8:33 pm      | 9:00 pm      |
| Miami       | 7:32 pm         | 8:26 pm      | 9:02 pm      |
| Los Angeles | 7:16 pm         | 8:14 pm      | 8:47 pm      |
| Montreal    | 7:37 pm         | 8:45 pm      | 9:09 pm      |
| Toronto     | 7:57 pm         | 9:03 pm      | 9:28 pm      |
| London      | 7:58 pm         | 9:15 pm      | 9:30 pm      |
| Jerusalem   | 7:00 pm         | 7:51 pm      | 8:42 pm      |
| Tel Aviv    | 6:58 pm         | 7:48 pm      | 8:39 pm      |
| Haifa       | 6:58 pm         | 7:49 pm      | 8:39 pm      |
| Be'er Sheva | 6:57 pm         | 7:47 pm      | 8:37 pm      |

## Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

**HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l**

We must always remember that which we read in the Haggadah, "And our toil - these are our children," meaning that it is worthwhile to invest all our effort to the success of our children's education.

One must always put before their eyes their precious children, and remember that every good thing that they do for the sake of Heaven will give him the merit that his children will grow to be great scholars and holy men.

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### SIXTH DAY OF PESACH

| City        | CANDLE LIGHTING |
|-------------|-----------------|
| New York    | 7:32 PM         |
| Miami       | 7:33 PM         |
| Los Angeles | 7:18 PM         |
| Montreal    | 7:40 PM         |
| Toronto     | 7:59 PM         |
| London      | 8:01 PM         |

### SEVENTH DAY OF PESACH

| City        | CANDLE LIGHTING AFTER |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| New York    | 8:35 PM               |
| Miami       | 8:27 PM               |
| Los Angeles | 8:16 PM               |
| Montreal    | 8:48 PM               |
| Toronto     | 9:05 PM               |
| London      | 9:19 PM               |

### LAST DAY OF PESACH

| City        | HOLIDAY ENDS |
|-------------|--------------|
| New York    | 8:36 PM      |
| Miami       | 8:28 PM      |
| Los Angeles | 8:17 PM      |
| Montreal    | 8:50 PM      |
| Toronto     | 9:07 PM      |
| London      | 9:21 PM      |



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