

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 135

Vayeshev | Sanctification of G-d's name

MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

From the weekly lectures of his son,
Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita

...*~* PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL *~*...

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Parshat Vayeshev

The Jewish Soul - A Temple

Rabbi Shalom Meir Wallach once share the following story:¹

Chopin, the great Polish composer, was a great patriot of his country. When Russia conquered Poland, he took it very hard. The sight of the Russian flag waving over government buildings, the official documents in the Russian language, and the patrols of Russian soldiers all stirred deep emotions in him.

Most of all, it was the indifference of the Polish citizens, who had resigned themselves to the new situation, that affected him. He decided to join the Polish government, aristocrats, and generals who had emigrated abroad, hoping for better times and the restoration of Poland's independence.

However, he quickly realized that he was the only idealist left. He observed all the "exiles" living their lives comfortably, and enjoying opportunities and luxuries that were not available in Poland. He saw that his memories of his homeland elicited disinterest at best and often scorn from his fellow compatriots.

"Your hope is lost, Poland," he would say to himself.

One evening, while passing by a synagogue immersed in darkness, he heard crying and moaning emanating from within. Chopin was startled alert. Who was crying in this dark building? Approaching a window, he saw in the darkness, the dim light of a candle, and he discerned the shadows of many people sitting on the floor. A gray-bearded man, holding a

candle in one hand and a scroll in the other, was reading with a trembling, weeping voice and a mournful tone. His reading was interrupted by occasional sighs and the weeping of all those present.

Chopin did not understand the words being read, but the spectacle deeply moved him. The sight of the Jewish community sitting on the ground in the darkness and the melancholy melody brought him to tears. He lost sense of time as he stood transfixed by the window.

Sometime later when the reading concluded, the attendees stood up, and headed towards the exit of the synagogue. Chopin noticed that those leaving were barefoot.

Turning to one of them, Chopin asked, "What happened here? What kind of gathering happened here in the dark?"

The individual looked at him with sad, tear-swollen eyes, and said, "On this day our temple was destroyed... and we were expelled from our land."

Chopin was surprised. He

had no idea that Jews had land that belonged to them. Nor had he heard that they fought to defend it.

"**Where** and when did this occur?" he asked.

"**In** our Holy Land of Israel, over seventeen hundred years ago," came the reply. On this very day, on the ninth of Av.

Chopin was astonished, and said with conviction, "I'm sure this nation will return to their land, a people who for over 1700 years, have not forgotten the destruction of their home will surely return to it!"

The Poles have much to learn about mourning for a lost homeland!"

This story exemplifies how the Ninth of Av was seen in the eyes of a Polish patriot.

However, Chopin did not realize that he was mistaken!

The people of Israel mourn not merely the loss of their independence, but more importantly the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.

The Jewish national independence was lost long before the destruction of the Temple; the Roman governor, stationed in Caesarea, who commanded over army units deployed throughout the country, had one of his largest fortifications in Antioch, near the Temple, from where he could observe the entire surrounding area.

On the 10th of Tevet the Roman occupation completed brutal suppression against the Jewish rebellion and the Romans once again took control of the entire country, besides Jerusalem.

The remaining Jewish rebels took refuge behind the fortified walls of Jerusalem, but after a blockade that lasted two and a half years, on the seventeenth of Tammuz, the walls were breached, and the Romans, entering the city, carried out a mass slaughter. Three weeks later, our holy Temple was set ablaze (490 years after the first Temple was destroyed on the very same day).

The 10th of Tevet and 17th of Tammuz are days of mourning; the sages instituted fasts on these days.

However, the saddest and most mournful date is the 9th of Av. On this day, we fast for a full day, read the book of Lamentations, sit on the ground, and refrain from wearing leather shoes.

The holy Temple was the heart and soul of the Jewish nation. Our collective memory cherishes this recollection and longs for its return.

In every prayer thrice daily, we ask for the restoration of the Temple: "And restore the service to Your dwelling place," "May it be Your will to rebuild the Temple speedily."

In grace after meals too, we implore the Al-mighty, "Have mercy over the great and holy house, called by Your name, and rebuild Jerusalem."

What is in fact the incredibly unique and exalted idea called 'the Temple in Jerusalem', the 'Beit Hamikdash' ?

No matter how we answer this question, explanations remain within the limits and confines of human understanding, which, as

Parshat Vayeshev - "Judah, your Brothers Will Praise you"

we know, is limited. The Temple is a very elevated spiritual reality that may take effort to relate to.

However, as much as

possible, we can understand some aspects of it.

As usual, we'll start with an introduction...

"Judah, your Brothers Will Praise you"

Throughout his life, our forefather Jacob ascended new heights in serving the Creator, step after step. And when he reached the age of 84, he was privileged to ascend to a new level unknown to him before; Jacob became a father.

To be a father means the Al-mighty chose one to be responsible for a Jewish soul, and to care for, nurture, and educate it. The Al-mighty relies on them, and they, in turn, are worthy to be a parent.

One must, therefore, fulfill their mission with joy, love, and responsibility on the one hand, and confidence in their abilities on the other.

Jacob fulfilled his mission of upbringing faithfully and devotedly, raising each of his sons according to their unique talents and qualities². When Jacob turned 100, his twelfth son, Benjamin, was born. At the age of 130, he descended to Egypt together with his entire family.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

2. Rabbi Gershon Ashkenazi, wrote in "Avodat HaGershoni":

All the sons of Jacob possessed immense perfection, yet each had a specific task. Jacob understood that the unique quality of Reuben is the power of sight. Simeon – the power of hearing. Levi – the purity of thought and intellect, always connected to the greatness and exaltation of God. Judah – the holiness of speech. Issachar –

the power of perseverance. Zebulun – the love of Torah. Benjamin – the dedication of the heart to the Almighty. Dan – piety. Naphtali – confidence and hope in God. Gad – compassion for others (Gad – acronym for Gomel Dalim, aiding the needy). And Joseph – his attribute is the holiness of chastity.

Jacob – educated each of his sons according to their individual path...

Parshat Vayeshev - An Inspired Birth

After living in Egypt for 17 years, one beautiful day, Jacob felt an extraordinary light illuminating his soul, filling him with an otherworldly feeling and a special tranquility. Jacob understood that his time had come to leave this transient world for the world to come, and summoned all his sons to bless them before his death.

Each received a blessing suitable for him: "And he blessed them; each one according to their

blessing, he blessed them."

In Judah's blessing, Jacob said, "Judah, your brothers will praise." Our sages explain this verse as follows: "Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: Your brothers will be called by your name. A person will not say, 'I am Reubenite' or 'I am Simeonite,' but one will say, 'I am a Judean³.'"

What is so special and unique about Judah that all twelve tribes are named specifically after him?

An Inspired Birth

To Rebecca, two sons had been born, Esau and Jacob, and to her brother Laban in Haran, two daughters were born, Leah and Rachel. It is unknown who first decided that the elder daughter is suitable for the elder twin (i.e., Leah for Esau), and the younger for the second twin (Rachel for Jacob). However, after this idea was voiced, it gained universal acceptance.

When Leah found out how depraved her destined husband Esau was, she was utterly dismayed and frightened, however Leah did not despair. Leah did not cease to pour out her soul before the Creator to annul the decree in prayer, day after day, week after week, year after year.

A person with the awareness that the Universe has a Master,

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

3. As the Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah, Parshah 98, Verse 6) continues on: "Rabbi Yehuda bar Simon said, it is comparable to a king who had twelve

sons, and one of them was loved by him more than all the others, he gave him a portion to himself in addition to the portion with his brothers.

knows that there are no hopeless situations. "Even if a sharp sword rests on a person's neck, he should not despair from seeking mercy."

Thus, several years passed. Jacob arrives in Haran, intending to marry Rachel. Leah was out of the picture.

Jacob made an agreement with Laban to work for seven years to marry Rachel. Leah continued praying.

The wedding date arrived. Jacob, despite having had many prophetic visions, speaking with angels, and being a most righteous individual, did not realize that the girl standing with him under the wedding canopy was actually Leah, not Rachel.

"Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, who hears prayer!" Leah merited to marry Jacob, and within that year, Leah is privileged to hold her child. After the first child, a second and a third are born...

And then, on the 15th of Sivan, in the year 2,195 to creation, Leah gives birth to her fourth son, Judah.

At the moment of his birth, Leah experienced unique heavenly inspiration. She vividly felt the mercy and kindness of the Creator filling all worlds, leaving no place untouched by the divine light.

With the birth of Judah, Leah reached the pinnacle of the purpose of creation.

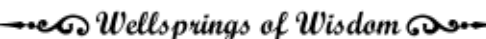
Purpose of Creation – Gratitude

In a talk delivered by my father, Rabbi Yoram, he said⁴:

"One must know that the purpose of creation is for the beings to recognize the constant mercy of the Creator and His

infinite goodness towards them, and thank Him for it.

When Moshiach comes, all sacrifices will be annulled, except for the Thanksgiving offering. A Thanksgiving offering is the



result of a deep awareness of the Creator's mercy, causing a hymn of gratitude to burst forth from a person's mouth. This expression of gratitude is the purpose of creation. Our recognition of thanks and appreciation, brings satisfaction to the Creator more than anything else.

When Judah was born, Leah felt very palpably grateful to the Creator. She felt the illuminating inspiration of the Creator's mercy. After all, I am not entitled to such a gift!

To ensure that this all-encompassing feeling would never dull, she named her son - Judah. This way every time she would call him by name, she would be reminded of G-d's great mercies bestowed upon her⁵.

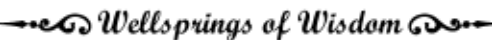
Rabbi Yoram further writes that through this gratitude, which Leah felt especially at the birth of Judah, attracted to her son a powerful spiritual

flow of greatness and wisdom that made him worthy of becoming a king to his brethren. King David, his royal lineage, and many righteous individuals, were all descendants of Judah. Above all, the Moshiach, of course, will be of Judaic descent as well.

Rabbi Ephraim Feldman once asked:⁶ It would be more appropriate to have called him 'Odeh' (I give thanks), as stated in the verse: "Leah said, 'this time, I give thanks (odeh) to the L-rd". Why was he instead called Judah (I will give thanks), connoting something that would be in the future?

Rather, this is due to the fact that Judah had an additional potential embedded in him, and she received the divine inspiration to name him differently...

It is in our weekly portion, that we discover this potential that is being referred to...



5. Rabbi Moshe Shick in Otzar Ephraim (Bereshit, 2, p. 601)

6. in "Yadot Ephraim", Parshat Vayechei

Crisis Following Joseph's Sale

In our weekly Torah portion, the tale is told of how Joseph's brothers went to pasture their father's flocks and were delayed. Jacob sent his most beloved son Joseph to check their welfare.

Despite the fact that his brothers resented him due to his preferred status and grandiose dreams, Joseph hurried to fulfill his father's command. He searches for his brothers and finally finds them in Dothan.

Seeing Joseph, the brothers plot him harm: "Here comes that dreamer, let us kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a wild animal devoured him, and we'll see what comes of his dreams."

When Joseph approached his brothers, they stripped him of his multicolored robe (from his father that aroused envy among them) and threw him into a pit teeming with snakes and scorpions.

Judah, having the highest status among the brothers, suggested to them: "What will

we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh."

His brothers listened to him, instead of killing Joseph, the brothers sold Joseph to the Midianites, who sold him to the Ishmaelites, and Joseph ended up in Egypt. He never returned home to his father, and all attempts to find him ended unsuccessfully. Jacob, hearing that Joseph had disappeared, was filled with grief, "tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourned for his son for many days. All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. He said, 'I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.'

When the brothers saw how much their father was brokenhearted over Joseph, they accused Judah:

"Judah! You were the most respected among us, we treated you as king. If you had

Parshat Vayeshev - The Tale of Tamar

told us to bring Joseph back home, we would have listened to you ! From today onward we will no longer consider you our leader and king."

Judah then went down to the town Adullam and took Ilat⁷, the Canaanite daughter of Shua, as his wife. She bore him three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. When Er grew up, Judah took a wife for him named Tamar (she was the righteous Shem's granddaughter). However, Er

behaved improperly, and as a result, was punished with death by the Creator.

Judah then gave Tamar to his second son Onan in marriage, but he followed the actions of the first, and the same unfortunate fate befell him as well.

Judah sent Tamar back to her parents, telling her to wait until his third son, Shelah, grew up, and she would be able to marry him.

The Tale of Tamar

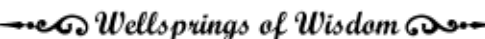
Tamar, returned to her parents, and waited. However, seeing that "Shelah had grown up, yet she had not been given to him in marriage," Tamar understood that they didn't intend to marry her to Shelah.

Despite being young and beautiful, easily able to marry somebody else, she was not ready to give up. Tamar decided to return to Judah's house, come what may. She had felt the

spiritual bliss that was constantly present in Judah's household, and longed for that purity of gratitude and nullification to the divine.

An opportunity presented itself: "It was told to Tamar, 'Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.'" Tamar took action: changing her clothes, she sat by the roadside to get Judah's attention. She was successful:

"When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, for she



7. As in Seder Hadorot, year (2,217).

had covered her face, and he went over to the roadside and said to her, 'Come now, be with me.'

'And what will you give me in exchange?' she asked.

'I'll send you a young goat from my flock,' he said.

'Will you give me something as a pledge until you send it?' she asked.

He asked, 'What pledge should I give you?'

'Your seal and its cord, and the staff in your hand,' she answered.

He gave them to her and was with her." (Genesis 38:15-18)

Three months had passed and Judah was told that Tamar, his daughter-in-law, had acted indecently: "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, is guilty of harlotry, and she is now pregnant." Judah convened a court, which ruled that Tamar

deserved the death penalty and was to be burned by the stake.⁸

To avoid unnecessarily prolonging the suffering, the sentence was to be carried out immediately. Tamar stood by the fire. She could already feel the flames starting to burning her...⁹

Discreetly, she sent a riddled message to Judah: "I am pregnant by the man who owns these, please recognize whose seal and cloak and staff these are."

When Judah saw and recognized the items, he understood what had happened and felt immense shame. However, if he were to reveal the truth in front of everyone, including the respected judges, it would be a great desecration of the name of G-d!

The forces of good and evil began to fiercely struggle against each other. Each side presented compelling arguments

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

8. Shem, Tamar's grandfather, was a Cohen, and the corporeal punishment of an adulterous daughter of a Cohen is by fire.

9. As Tosfot describes (Bava Metzia 59a)

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in its favor. Closing his eyes, Judah firmly decided: "There is no greater sanctification of the name of the Al-mighty than

doing what He wants!"¹⁰ Judah stood up and proclaimed, "She is more righteous than I, the blame is entirely mine!"

Sanctifying G-d's Name

“And Judah recognized and said, 'She is more righteous than I.' (Genesis 38:26) Our sages ask: Was it necessary for the Torah to mention again the name of Judah? We already know that the incident involved him?

The Talmud explains (Sotah 10b): Rav Chanin bar Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida... since Judah sanctified the name of Heaven in public, he merited and was called by the name of the Holy One, blessed be He!

To further clarify: One of the principles of faith is 'that the Creator, blessed be His name,

has no body, and no material resemblance can be compared to Him, and there is nothing whatsoever that resembles Him.'

But since He desired that we have the possibility of a connection with Him, He designated Himself with names and titles, and by doing so, we can turn to Him and converse with Him.

The loftiest name of G-d, the 'essential name' is the Tetragrammaton, composed of four letters: Yud, Hei, Vav, and Hei.

When Tamar requested, 'Please recognize to whom these

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

10. In Tanya (Chapter 41), the following is written: Every Jew must reflect deeply, that “behold, the Lord stands over them, and the fullness of the earth is filled with His glory. He gazes upon them, examining their kidneys and heart to see if they serve Him properly.

Therefore, one must serve Him with awe and fear as if standing before a king...”

This contemplation will generate in their heart a sense of awe and fear of transgressing the eyes of the Lord. This will give one the power to be guarded from prohibited places...”

belong...' (Genesis 38:25) – Judah succeeded to distance himself from materialism, nullify any emotion of self-importance, and desire for self-preservation, and within him, a feeling of pure submission emerged.

“And Judah recognized and said, 'She is more righteous than I'. In doing so, he sanctified the Lord in public, and was therefore called 'Judah,' which include all four letters of the Tetragrammaton. The verse thus reiterates the name Judah to

emphasize that Judah recognized that he is merely a vessel to reveal the divinity of G-d in the world.

Here the Torah reveals to us why he was called Judah, not 'Odeh'. Within him was hidden the additional power of absolute nullification to God, the power of sanctifying the Lord. And with this power, Judah decided: 'I must do what He wants me to do!'...¹¹

And with this we can also understand why Jacob chose specifically this name for the entire Jewish nation. The essence

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

11. The sanctification of G-d's name is to do whatever the Al-mighty wants us to !

The following is related in "Ein Yehudi," (Part 2, page 137):

Uncle Herbert came from America to visit Israel. Family members from all over the country gathered at an uncle's house in Tel Aviv to see him, listen to his stories about life in the "Golden Land," and, for some, just to meet him. With brotherly love and open mouths, everyone sat and listened to his tales. At some point, Uncle Herbert, who until now had been considered in the family to be observing traditions, casually mentioned that on Saturday he drives to the synagogue by

car. The faces of those present changed, expressing their dissatisfaction and uneasiness with what they heard.

Uncle Herbert, noticing the cooling attitude towards him, explained, attempting to justify himself: "The synagogue is a four-hour walk from our house. Going there on Saturday is the only source of Jewish warmth and consciousness for my children and myself. Prayer, an inspiring sermon by the rabbi, meeting with the members of the Jewish community at the kiddush after prayer, all these guarantee that my children will remember that they are Jews.

Can I give up all this because of the prohibition to drive on Saturday? What

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would my Jewishness and the Jewishness of my children look like, if I remain in the house in observance of the Shabbat?

The family members exchanged knowing glances. While Uncle Herbert's heartfelt words touched upon a cord, they could not altogether agree with him.

In the Torah is written very clearly the prohibition to kindle a fire on the Sabbath!

Another story:

The religious youth movement opened a new branch in a neighborhood in southern Israel. The youth in the area were unfamiliar with Judaism and its values, and much ingenuity was required to pique their interest.

The task was given to Yigal, who was an energetic and experienced youth instructor. Indeed, his appointment to this position was justified: in a relatively short time, he managed to enroll a large number of additional young men and women to attend the various activities of the new branch.

Yigal explained: "What I do at first, is beyond the norm of the accepted: singing and mixed dancing, and on Saturday nights, movie screenings. But don't worry, it's only for now. Later, when they get used to coming to the branch, we'll work with them on Jewish traditions and identity, and everything will be in order. Please trust me!"

Can we rely on Yigal's unusual approach?

In life, we encounter situations where we must give up something to achieve something greater.

We annul a commandment to fulfill a more important purpose underlying the commandment.

A car driver disregards a red traffic light when rushing an injured person to the hospital.

A manager who sells merchandise may sometimes override explicit instructions from the business owner who is absent, if the merchant believes that the circumstances are such that if the owner were here, they would also agree.

This is indeed the case when the one giving the instructions is human. A person is naturally short-sighted, and cannot foresee all the situations that may arise.

However, things are very different when it comes to the Creator of the world who sees from beginning to the end of time. We may sometimes think that specific instructions hinder the achievement of the greater goal, however, it is a serious mistake.

We cannot say that if the Creator learned about the new, unexpected data, He, too, would understand the need to cancel this or that instruction for the sake of the greater goal. When one argues that due to the development of society and changing conditions throughout history, there is a need to change the Torah and adapt it to the changing reality, he is essentially claiming that the one who

Parshat Vayeshev - Sanctifying G-d's Name

gave the Torah is shortsighted and could not foresee such changes in advance.

However, our G-d, the Giver of the Torah, who looks at the end from the beginning, gave us a system of instructions that is valid forever. The Torah does not need periodic repairs to fit to the conditions of the time; it is always suitable. It also does not need our input regarding which instruction to omit to help the Al-mighty who 'forgot' or 'did not take into account' a new situation or unusual conditions.

The Torah takes into account possible situations of conflict between different commandments, and a large body of Halacha deals specifically with these situations. The famous instruction, 'Pikuach Nefesh overrides Shabbat,' addresses the case where the commandment to preserve life clashes with the commandment of observing the Sabbath. A Cohen who discovers a lost object in a cemetery, or a father who forbids his son to perform a commandment and to study Torah—are examples of different situations of practical conflict between the observance of the different commandments, which the Torah mediates the proper balance in these defined cases.

Even one who is not a prominent Torah scholar knows maxims such as 'There is a time to do for G-d, nullify your Torah,' 'An action to be performed overrides a prohibition,' and the like. These are just some of the many rules that guide us on how to behave in cases of conflict

between different commandments. It is unthinkable for a Jew to easily decide for himself how to act in such a case. When a person faces such a problem of conflict, or what appears to him as a conflict, between different commandments, he must turn to a qualified halachic authority who will guide him according to the guidelines of the Torah law.

If Uncle Herbert had turned to a rabbi with his dilemma, he surely would not dismiss his problem lightly. Perhaps he would offer him to walk 4-3 hours on foot. Maybe he would suggest renting a room for Shabbat near the synagogue. Perhaps he would even propose that he move his place of residence to be closer to the synagogue. The rabbi would surely not allow him to drive on Shabbat.

Similarly, if Yigal, the youth instructor, would've turned to a rabbi with halachic authority, the rabbi might have asked him in astonishment: Does one seek to do business off the Torah that they decide which transgression is permissible to commit in order to profit a more important mitzvah?

Yigal wants to "help" the Creator, but the Creator says, "I do not need your help!" It is difficult to imagine that by violating the will of the Creator, however minutely, we can achieve the goal of fulfilling the will of the Creator. It is impossible to teach people the basics of Judaism by attracting them through sinful means. The vegetarian society will not increase its faithful members by giving away beef cutlets for free.

Parshat Vayeshev - Sanctifying G-d's Name

Let's imagine that someone approaches a Jew and suggests that he broadcast Torah lessons on the weekly portion on television on Shabbat. If the Jew consults an authentic rabbi, it can be assured that the rabbi would not permit participation and assistance in public violation of Shabbat, even for something that appears to be a mitzvah. It's even possible that the rabbi, knowledgeable in the public psyche, will express concern that many traditionally observant Jews, who have not used television until now, might take it as permission granted to now have their television devices turned on Shabbat, claiming, "A rabbi is delivering Torah lessons on the weekly portion on it!"

The Jew in question however, might believe that he does not need a rabbi. His heart burns with a strong passion for spreading Torah and fear of Heaven. He may be eager to bring the word of G-d to every Jewish home, even on Shabbat, and isn't willing to abstain from such a holy and great mission due to a "minor prohibition." He might believe that he is guaranteed a reward in the future, and those who will return to Torah observance through hearing his teachings on Shabbat would surely bring about a favorable judgment for him.

The folly in this approach is illustrated in the following story:

The king of a land sent one of his courtiers to a neighboring state to represent him as ambassador. He ordered him with the strange instruction to under no circumstances undress in

front of others. Surprised, the nobleman pledged that he wouldn't do so.

Indeed, throughout his long tenure he heeded this strange request of the king. However, shortly before he had to return, a grand banquet was held in his honor, during which he dropped his handkerchief. One of the local ministers hurried to pick it up, and, handing it to the envoy, said that he didn't want to trouble him since he was apparently a hunchback.

The surprised ambassador objected, stating that his back is as straight as a ruler; he had no hunchback whatsoever. The assembled there, including dignitaries, gathered to witness how this quarrel would end. Eventually, the ambassador and the minister decided to wager one hundred thousand gold coins on whether the ambassador had a hunchback or not. With a triumphant look, the ambassador unbuttoned his clothes to prove his point.

He hadn't forgotten the king's orders, but it was understood that such a strange turn of events was not foreseen. One hundred thousand gold coins was no small fortune, and the state treasury could very well make use of them. Therefore, deciding to donate all the winnings to the treasury, the ambassador bared his back and presented it to public scrutiny. Unpleasant as it was, for the sake of the state treasury he was willing to take the hit...

The local minister, having lost the wager, counted out the entire sum with

Parshat Vayeshev - Sanctification of G-d's Name

of the service of G-d is to nullify oneself to the Lord, blessed be

He, and to do what He wants with simplicity and sincerity.

Sanctification of G-d's Name

In the Torah portion of Emor, the Al-mighty tells us: "Do not profane My holy name, I am to be sanctified amongst the people of Israel. I am the L-rd, who sanctifies you."

To get an idea on Sanctification of G-d's Name, we find in "Sfat Emet":¹²

In Tractate Avot is written: "Everything that the Al-mighty created in His world, He created for His glory, as it is said: 'Everyone called by My name, and for My glory, I created him, I formed him, and I made him.'"

Along with our physical world, the Al-mighty created many spiritual worlds. In the spiritual realms, His divine light is vividly manifested, sustaining and animating them.

However, our physical world operates according to the laws of nature, which create a certain veil, hiding the Creator from us. The creations in our physical world feel that their existence is independent and may ignore the divine energy sustaining them.

This is what the Al-mighty requests of the people of Israel: "I am to be sanctified amongst

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

a crestfallen face and handed it over to the ambassador.

When the ambassador triumphantly returned to his country, the first question the king asked him was, "Did you undress publicly?"

"**No...** I mean, yes... but for it I won a huge sum, to help our treasury..."

"**Horrific!**" the king exclaimed in aggravation. "I bet a million gold coins

with the king of that country that they wouldn't be able to undress my honorable ambassador in front of the public!"

This is what happens when people, instead of following orders, start calculating what is more beneficial to the one who gave the command. If this is true regarding the command of a king of flesh and blood, all the more so concerning the commandments of the King of Kings, blessed be He.

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Parshat Vayeshev - On the Peak of a Volcano

the people of Israel." They must be aware that behind the laws of nature stands the Creator. He established them, and He can change them as needed.

This awareness should manifest in one's thoughts and actions too. When all a person's actions, words, and thoughts align with the desire of the Creator, he thus sanctifies His Great Name.

On the Peak of a Volcano

Let's imagine the following:

A tourist enjoys a hike through the thrilling bliss of untouched nature, passing by crystal-clear waters, hearing the songs of exotic birds, breathing in fresh air...

They then climb to the top of a mountain, only to be disappointed: it is an unremarkable, lifeless mountain of cold black stones, and that's it. Suddenly, the mountain starts trembling. Smoke starts flowing from its peak, and it

begins to erupt with molten lava from its crater.

This visitor encountered a dormant volcanic peak, its prolonged serenity belying the potential for an imminent eruption, releasing its fervent and dynamic core.¹³

Similarly, a Jew may seem completely lifeless, with no hint of a Jewish soul apparent on the outside. However, inside, no matter how distant a person may

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

13. Parenthetically: Any eruption of a volcano is a phenomenon of great intensity. However, the most powerful volcanic eruption occurred in Krakatoa.

Krakatoa is one of the islands in the Sunda Strait in Indonesia, which previously (in 1883, to be precise) included the islands: Lang, Verlaten, Pulau Hoed, and Rakata, also known as Krakatoa.

In the Indonesian Krakatoa, there is a

volcanic site with three volcanoes: Rakata, Danan, and Perboewatan. In 1883, there was a massive volcanic eruption (equivalent to the power of 13,000 atomic bombs like those dropped on Hiroshima !), causing the complete disappearance of the island Pulau Hoed, and 21 square kilometers out of 31 square kilometers of Rakata.

Mount Danan, originally 455 meters high, almost entirely vanished, leaving only a few meters. Mount Perboewatan, reaching

be, there is a tremendous reserve of energy waiting to be unleashed.

As my father, Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel once said:

In the innermost part of the heart of every Jew, there is a sacred spark that never breaks its connection with the Creator. Even if a person stains their soul with sins to the point that nothing pure is visible, this all pertains merely to the external part of the soul. However, the most inner and concealed part cannot be tainted. It always remains pure and pristine.

Concerning this inner part, it is said, "And your Nation, are

all righteous." Even if, concerning external actions, one cannot be called righteous, this innermost part has never sinned. It remains unstained by sin, and with regards to this part, a person can be called righteous.

This can also be understood from what is written: "Who dwells amongst them in their impurity." Amidst all the impurity created by a person's sins, there is an internal aspect of the soul that cannot be stained. In this part resides the light of the Creator, no matter how much of a sinner a person may be.¹⁴

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

a height of 122 meters, disappeared completely, and only Mount Rakata, with a height of 813 meters, remained relatively intact. The other islands (Lang and Sertung) were almost unaffected.

14. If heaven forbid, one belittles a Jew, they desecrate the name of G-d!

Rabbi Abargel, once said (Amrei Noam, Sefirat HaOmer):

Know that in every Jew, there is a holy soul in which the light of the Creator dwells.

In the innermost heart of each and every

one of the people of Israel, there is a holy and pure spark carved from the actual light of the Blessed One (see in Ohr HaChaim on Leviticus 26:11), "a portion of God above" (Job 31:2). This holy spark is hinted at by the letter Yud, as it is the first letter of the name of the Blessed Creator. Therefore, the designation 'Jew' begins with the letter Yud and ends with the letter Yud. Moreover, the very pronunciation of the word 'Yehudi' is derived from the letter Yud.

Furthermore, the full name of God, the Tetragrammaton (Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey), is hinted at in the word 'Yehudi.' The first

Parshat Vayeshev - Creation Sustained by (the name of) G-d

In their deepest core, every Jew loves the Creator and is even willing to sacrifice their life to sanctify His name, as written in the Tanya: "Even the simplest Jew, and even evildoers, are ready to sacrifice their lives and suffer greatly to not betray the Creator."

Every Jew loves the Creator

Creation Sustained by (the name of) G-d

The teachings of Kabbalah describe: At the beginning of everything, His blessed light filled all of existence. When it was His will to create beings that would experience themselves as individual entities, he had to conceal and hide His blessed light. For when His blessed light shines in revelation, there can be no other existence.

The name Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey

and desires to fulfill His will, but the evil inclination may confuse them, tempting them to violate the will of the Creator. It clouds the person's consciousness, as it is said: "A person does not sin until a spirit of folly enters him," however, this is not their true desire.

To provide further understanding on the essence of a Jew..

is called the 'Essence Name' because it indicates the infinite light of the Blessed One Himself. This is the aspect of the "light that surrounds all worlds," the light that encompasses all of existence in an infinite manner and cannot be revealed and clothed internally in worlds and creations.

Therefore, even though it is the essence of the vitality of the worlds, it is not stirred

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

three letters of this word (Yud-Hey-Vav) are the first three letters of the name of God, and from the last two letters (Daled-Yud), we form the last letter of the name of God (Hey) when we place the letter Yud inside the letter Daled. All of

this comes to allude to the greatness of the unity of the holy spark within the innermost heart of every Jew. It also serves as a hint that there is no difference between belittling a Jew and erasing the name of God... See there at length.

or apprehended in them in revelation, for it is above and beyond the concept of revelation, rather the name Elokim, which signifies the contracted and concealed divine light within the boundaries of creation is what enters and energizes nature. Therefore, 'Elokim' has the numerical value of 'nature.'

Our sages divided all the creatures in our lowly world into four categories, which are (from lowest to highest): inanimate, plant, animal, and human.

As mentioned, all these four categories are physically formed

by the name Elohim, which is the name that gives the possibility for the sensation of existence.

However, above all these four categories, there is a fifth existence: the Jew.

The Jew does not belong to the categories of creation, and therefore, he cannot be classified within these four categories !

In every Jew, there are two souls: the first soul called the vital soul (similar to the soul found in humans), and the second soul, which is a part of God above.

Let us now return to Tamar...

Why Such a Decree ?

Tamar stood before the court. The evidence was clear without any possibility of refutation... They deliberated, judged, and decreed: "Take her out, and she shall be burned" (Genesis 38:24) !

And the question is known: Why did they decree such upon her, when in fact, her actions did not constitute a capital offense ?

For she was neither married nor betrothed, she was underage, and there were no witnesses and warnings (and there are several other claims for exemption)? Indeed, we find among our holy sages an explanation based on what her soul received at Mount Sinai.

And we find some of the sages of Israel who wrote that

Parshat Vayeshev - A Jew is a Volcano !

she truly did not deserve such punishment, but it was a temporary ruling.

The court must've looked at Tamar and recoiled: What a dangerous woman she is! She killed her first husband (Er) and her second husband (Onan), and then she compromised her sanctity in such a terrible way... (Aside from the horror of her actions, she also caused desecration of God's name, as people will now say that this is how these religious individuals behave...)

Full of wickedness, she has no remorse, no trace of Judaism in her! It's dangerous to leave such wickedness in the world, so they decreed: 'Take her out, and she shall be burned'...

Tamar grasped their thoughts and recoiled:

A Jew is a Volcano !

Every Jew is a volcano! There is a dormant volcano, and there is an active volcano! But always, he remains a volcano!

Even if, to the visible eye, it seems that this Jew is distant from any trace of Jewishness and has

Do I have no trace of Judaism?! There is much good in me, and she took out the seal, cord, and staff and showed them... Look, how much good is in me...

And Judah was the first to grasp the depth of her words: She is right! There is much good in her, and he began to search for the good points in her... And suddenly, his eyes filled with tears: How much good is in her! She is much more righteous than I am!...

And the powerful emotion that Judah revealed was engraved in the Torah for eternity: "And Judah recognized and said, 'She is more righteous than I'" (same verse 26) - she is more righteous than I am!

And his heart filled with joy: I found a good woman to marry! And he married Tamar!

no holiness at all. Even if he emits hatred and animosity, boasting about his sins... And you stand and wonder: What is this? What kind of life is this? It doesn't seem that any signs of life, any signs of Judaism, remain in him...

Parshat Vayeshev - The Tetragrammaton Within a Jew

You must know: It is forbidden to scorn him... because within him, a divine fire burns, the fire of God's name, a part of God above, literally ! And when it bursts forth, all the rocks, sand, dust, ashes, and darkness will

vanish and disappear...

From within him, a divine fire will burst forth, a fire full of light and life, a red and burning fire, illuminating and coloring... and it will light up the entire world with divinity...

The Tetragrammaton Within a Jew

Tamar stood near the fire, smoke intertwined with the rising flames, and then she proved to them: I have redeeming qualities... because the divine soul within every Jew and Jewess is a literal divine part from above, the Tetragrammaton !

Judah understood: the holiness of this soul is above all the categories of creation; no one can harm it...

Our sages reveal to us that this is how Judah sanctified the Name of Heaven – he sanctified the Tetragrammaton within the divine soul !

When we believe in the sanctity of the divine soul and seek the good within the Jew, we sanctify the Tetragrammaton within the divine soul...

Many years passed since then, and our forefather Jacob was moments before his passing. He turned to Judah and said: "Judah, your brothers will praise you" (Genesis 49:8).

In Midrash Rabba (Vayechi, 10), it is said: 'Judah, your brothers will praise you' – it said to him, you admitted in the incident with Tamar, your brothers will praise you to be their king...

In Chassidut, it is explained that the king's role is to connect the souls of Israel to the Holy One, blessed be He. Since through the incident with Tamar, you merited and the great secret of Jewish souls was revealed to you, you are fit to be a king !...

Now, let's return to the Holy Temple...

The Holy Temple – Merits in Every Jew

In the Midrash Rabba, a story is recounted:

When the Romans captured the Second Temple, they were initially afraid to enter it. For this purpose, they hired someone named Joseph mi-Shita, a man willing to assist the occupiers in looting the temple vessels—for a modest reward, of course. The Romans promised Joseph that the first item he took out of the Temple would be his to keep. After some time, the enterprising collaborator, panting heavily appeared, carrying a menorah made of pure gold. However, the Romans dampened his enthusiasm: "Such a thing is not suitable for an ordinary person. Enter the Temple again and choose something else for yourself."

To their surprise, Joseph mi-Shita refused. Despite their offers—promising him tax exemption for three years—Joseph firmly rejected: "I have already angered the Creator once. Must I anger Him again?!"

The Romans would not accept such a refusal, the punishment for the defiant collaborator was shortly meted out. Joseph was tied to a bench, and they began sawing at him. Every time the saw teeth pierced his body, Joseph cried out, "Woe to me for angering my Creator." Soon, his soul departed from this world.

Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman once asked:

What inspired him so greatly that from being an apostate willing to collaborate with the Romans, he rose to such a high level that he was willing to sacrifice his life to sanctify the Creator's Name?

The answer is: he entered the Temple!

Feeling the radiance of the Shechinah there and experiencing the indescribable spiritual bliss from the close proximity to the Creator, it became impossible to dissuade

Parshat Vayeshev - The Holy Temple – Merits in Every Jew

him or tempt him. Not even the
fear of a painful death affected
him.

The volcano of holiness that

erupted from his soul could no
longer be stopped...

That's what the Temple was
for every Jew.



Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. There are no hopeless situations. The Al-mighty hears the prayer of every person, and there is no point in despair.
 2. The purpose of the world is gratitude to the Creator. Recognizing the good one receives, generates in a person gratitude.
 3. The greatest sanctification of G-d's name is to fulfill His will.
 4. Our physical world hides the divine light, and our task is to remove this barrier by obeying His will. Actions of mitzvahs are required; mere awareness is not enough.
 5. In every Jew, there is a concealed part of the soul that cannot be stained by any sins. Through discovering and revealing this part, a Jew can reach great heights.
 6. In the Temple, every Jew could feel the closeness of the Shechinah, and all the impure 'shells' covering his inner essence fell away.
- May** it be G-d's will to restore the Temple to its glory soon, in our days!

Shabbat Shalom !



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Shabbat Times Vayeshev

26th of Kislev, 5784

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:10 pm	5:13 pm	5:40 pm
Miami	5:12 pm	6:07 pm	6:42 pm
Los Angeles	4:26 pm	5:25 pm	5:56 pm
Montreal	3:53 pm	5:01 pm	5:23 pm
Toronto	4:22 pm	5:28 pm	5:52 pm
London	3:34 pm	4:50 pm	5:04 pm
Jerusalem	4:20 pm	5:10 pm	5:42 pm
Tel Aviv	4:16 pm	5:06 pm	5:37 pm
Haifa	4:13 pm	5:03 pm	5:34 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:18 pm	5:08 pm	5:39 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

Be wise and look toward the future, what will be with your children and grandchildren, do you want them to suffer because of your mistakes? To the contrary, you must provide them with many merits, so that if for some reason they may need a salvation, they will have their ancestral merits in their stead.

Many have been saved from all kinds of misfortune, merely because of their ancestors' merits. Their forefathers had merits which were unknown, and didn't receive credit or honor in this world. These merits were retained, and all the 'rights reserved' were to the credit of their descendants.



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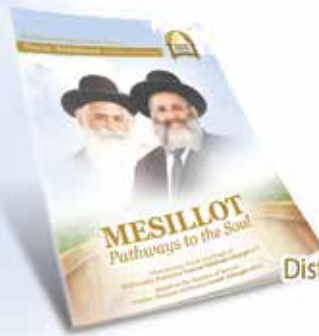
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