

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 246

Beshalach | Shabbat Unites G-d with His People



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

גלוון זה הוקדש להצלחת טאל' בנישו נ"י
בריאות עופר בני חי ומזוני

...∞ PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL ∞...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Confession of the Russian Liberator	1
The Cause of Auto-antisemitism	5
Balaam's Perception of the Jews	12
Manna—Heavenly Bread	15
The Seventh String of the Harp	18
The Exalted Mystery of Shabbat	19
Never to Be Sold into Slavery	21
<i>Summary and Practical Conclusions</i>	25



DONATE

Beit Hamidrash Hameir La'aretz

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

- ✉ 500 Frank W Burr Blvd Suite 47
Teaneck, NJ 07666
- ✉ en@h-l.org.il
- 🌐 www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en
- 📍 HaKatzir 666, Netivot, Israel

- 📞 (954) 800-6526
- 📺 HameirLaaretsEN
- 👤 HameirLaaretsEN
- 📞 054-870-8737

Message Us to Join Our WhatsApp Groups



Parshat Beshalach

The Confession of the Russian Liberator

The following story was recorded by *Rabbi Zalman Ruderman, Shlita (Bein HaDagim LaZemirot, vol. II, p. 224)*:

It was the first Shabbat after the liberation. The atmosphere that pervaded the camp—now freed and under the control of the Allied armies—was utterly unique. The thirteen barracks housing about a thousand young Jewish women were filled with a varied collection of natives of cities and towns across Germany, Russia, Ukraine, and other lands.

The emotional state of the young women was not uniform. Some of them, despite all they had endured during the years of terror, had managed to preserve an astounding degree of emotional stability. On the other hand, there were those whose minds had become unbalanced

as a result of all they had undergone and witnessed.

What they all shared was an extremely weakened physical condition. Every bowl of soup, every serving of potatoes and the like, aroused great joy and enthusiasm, even though now these were no longer in short supply.

Their feelings were mixed. On the one hand, their hearts were filled with joy and gratitude to G-d for their personal survival, together with hope for a better future. On the other hand, the joy and hope were mingled with an ocean of pain and sorrow over the loss of parents, siblings, extended family, friends, and acquaintances.

Yet when Shabbat arrived, a completely different atmosphere descended upon the camp. Shabbat brought with it calm

and tranquility that lifted everyone a handbreadth above the painful reality that they had all experienced.

The happy, positive side of the new situation gradually began to take root in the survivors' minds. Suddenly, a message spread through the camp: tomorrow, all would gather outside one of the barracks to recite the *Birkat HaGomel* thanksgiving blessing in a large assembly during the prayers that would be recited that morning.

From the windows of every barrack glimmered the flames of Shabbat candles that evening. The serenity of the Seventh Day, together with the joy of being saved, intermingled and enveloped the anguished souls in a mantle of spiritual uplift.

Suddenly, the sputter of a motor was heard from the direction of the camp gate. Pesya, the camp secretary, expressed her surprise at this. She declared emphatically that it couldn't be the American director, for he had promised her

that they would not be disturbed during Shabbat and that any matter, trivial or important, would be postponed to Sunday!

The car that entered the camp gates stopped near the office and out stepped a middle-aged man in an unfamiliar, impeccably pressed military uniform. It was a Russian officer. After presenting documents attesting that he was a communications officer from the Red Army, he clarified his purpose. He demanded to meet immediately with the thirty-six girls in the camp who held Russian citizenship. He even insisted that no one besides them be present at the meeting. "Not even you," he snapped at Pesya irritably.

But the girls, who had already grown accustomed to fearing anyone in uniform, stood firm in insisting that Pesya also be present at the meeting with the officer. The officer gnashed his teeth, but he had no effective way to prevent Pesya from entering the room. In truth, it was hard to understand the

Parshat Beshalach - The Confession of the Russian Liberator

strange reason for his objection to Pesya's presence.

The officer launched into an eloquent speech about "the values of liberation and freedom" and about "the Red Army that liberates and brings its sons and daughters 'home.'" He informed the girls of their impending return to their homeland and tried to infect them with his rousing enthusiasm. He ended his impassioned speech with a cry of "Long live Stalin!"

The officer's words were met with an altogether cold and indifferent response from the young Jewish women. His eyes betrayed disappointment and perhaps even anger. He attempted—without much success—to disguise it with a forced smile.

In response, the poor girls burst out with a barrage of various strange demands and declarations: "We're not leaving here without shoes!" one declared. "If the Americans increase the food rations, it's worth staying here!" announced another, and so on.

The officer promised them the moon, and when even that did not help, he threatened that if they did not cooperate, they would be taken away by force.

Pesya accompanied him, out of courtesy, as he walked back to his car. Before getting into the car, he turned his face to her, fixed her with a hostile glare, and spat out, "I deeply despise you"...

Pesya did not lose her composure. In a move he did not expect at all, she turned to the officer and asked him to step into the office with her, saying she had something important to tell him. The surprised officer hesitated for a moment but finally acceded to her request—whether out of embarrassment or out of curiosity.

On the desk in the office danced the two tiny flames of the Shabbat candles. Pesya pointed at them and addressed the officer in an impassioned voice: "Do you see these? These are Shabbat candles. In a little while, they will burn out, but in the meantime, they still burn. I want to say to you in their

Parshat Beshalach - The Confession of the Russian Liberator

presence that you are a Jew." The officer's face alternately paled and flushed. His eyes darted restlessly around the room, then back to the candles and to Pesya.

Pesya continued mercilessly: "You are a Jew. All the signs attest to it. I sensed it when I saw you entering the camp gates. I clearly noticed how, upon hearing the *Shabbat Shalom* greeting in the air, you dramatically slowed your steps. When you spoke of 'freedom,' you did so with an eagerness that is characteristic of a Jew who has never truly known or tasted what freedom is. And now, when you said you hate me—without ever having seen my face before—it left no doubt in my mind that, indeed, you are a Jew. It can only be that in me, a daughter of Israel, you saw your inner conscience screaming. Essentially, what you meant to say is that you hate your people, your cradle, yourself. I am only the symbol of your inner self!"

He stood rooted to the spot, his facial features frozen like cold steel. A moment passed,

and another moment, and suddenly, the muscles of his face twitched, and his eyes moistened. He buried his face in his hands. When he raised his eyes again, they were utterly transformed—extinguished, submissive, haunted.

After another moment of silence, the Russian officer swallowed and began a frank personal confession.

"Yes," he said, "I am a Jew. My elderly mother prays to this day that her son will return to the way of his ancestors and live as a faithful Jew. But I gave the best years of my life to the service of mighty, great Russia.

Until the war, I was a happy man. But when the Germans invaded Ukraine, my best friend betrayed my wife and my son to the murderers. They were all burned alive. Even my comrades jeeringly yelled at me, 'Yuda! Yuda!' (Jew! Jew!). I thought the solution to all this suffering and misery was to deepen the grave I had dug for my soul—the grave of my very own Judaism"...

Parshat Beshalach - The Cause of Auto-antisemitism

He cast a long, deep gaze at the little flames, then whispered in a choked,

barely audible voice, "Shabbat Shalom," then turned around and left...

The Cause of Auto-antisemitism

Following this story, we may ask, "From where in the soul does such a deep self-hatred stem? How does one come to feel this way?"

As painful as it is, it's not a new phenomenon at all. It has accompanied the people of Israel for many, many generations.

Take, for example, the generations that lived toward the end of the First Holy Temple era. They were at the height of the beauty, splendor, grace, and dignity of the people of Israel.

The Holy Temple, standing in its place, radiated an awe-inspiring holiness over the entire world in general and over the Land of Israel in particular. All avenues of divine inspiration were open to them; all the paths to attaining spiritual delight were paved before them; the tangible experience of G-dliness, peace, and contentment...¹

Yet despite all this, there were many Jews who had deep-seated self-hatred and who were ashamed of their own nation. They strove with all their might to

∞ Wellsprings of Wisdom ∞

1. The capacity for *ta'anug* (pleasure, delight) is its essence, a spiritual faculty. Whoever studies Torah in depth merits to taste from it — especially if he merits that the gates of the mystical Torah are opened to him, wherein lies the core of the sensation of delight...

On this subject, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Morgenstern Shlita writes (Yam

HaChochmah, 2006, p. 305):

"The wisdom of Kabbalah is unlike material wisdom. In material wisdom, when the mind grasps and comprehends the wisdom, it unites with it. Not so with the wisdom of Kabbalah: even when the mind understands and comprehends it, it does not unite with it. The wisdom of Kabbalah is, in essence, a very lofty spiritual light that encloses itself in words and letters. Therefore, only when

resemble the nations of the world around them—and engaged in *avodah zarah* (idol worship)!

Worshipping idols was backbreaking toil, a service fraught with difficulties and cruelty—burning one's children to Molech, offering living people as sacrifices, cutting one's own body and flesh, and other such nonsense—nevertheless, they

were willing to undergo all those hardships, all just to escape their own nation – to depart from the people of Israel and instead belong to the general populace around them...²

At the end of the Second Temple era, the situation grew even worse, as described at length in *Josephus*. The slander that Jews informed against their

 *Wellsprings of Wisdom* 

one succeeds in penetrating beyond the garment of the words and letters and reaching the light that is hidden within them can one say that he has attained something in the wisdom of Kabbalah.

As long as a person does not have a feeling (*regesh*) for the spiritual light of Kabbalah, it cannot be said that he truly knows Kabbalah — because Kabbalah is a spiritual light called *raz* ("secret," which in *gematria* equals "light").

The first principle that one must know is that to receive this light of Kabbalah, one must first reach the light of the sefirah of Chochmah, which is characterized by *bittul* (self-nullification).

When one recognizes the quality of Chochmah—that is, the aspect of spiritual light of the right brain, one may reveal this light. In truth, one could call the wisdom of

Kabbalah "the wisdom of delight" because the comprehension of Chochmah is related to *oneg* (delight), and kabbalists merit attaining this spiritual delight.

This spiritual delight is analogous to the feeling of delight that a person experiences when, for example, he enters into deep contemplation in Torah study (which corresponds to the sefirah of Binah).

After he merits to grasp some concept or novel insight in his learning, he then receives spiritual delight from the sefirah of Chochmah — it is this Divine light that we speak of..."

2. *Our saintly master, Rabbi Shimon Zelichover, of blessed memory, wrote a lengthy letter in the days after Kristallnacht (16 Cheshvan 5699). Below is a small excerpt of the full text that appeared on 19 Kislev 5699:*

Parshat Beshalach - The Cause of Auto-antisemitism

brothers was revolting and treacherous—but it didn't matter to those informers as long as the Jewish people would be destroyed and they could attach themselves to the nations of the world...

This phenomenon resurfaced repeatedly throughout history, as those well-versed in Jewish history know very well...

In recent years, this phenomenon has even acquired a

name: "auto-antisemitism"—the obsessive hostility of a Jew toward his own people and religion, similar to the hatred harbored by antisemites from among other nations and religions...

In the holy *Gemara* (Talmud, Pesachim 103a), it is related as follows: One Shabbat, Rav Ya'akov bar Abba was a guest at Rava's house... That Shabbat was especially radiant

∞ Wellsprings of Wisdom ∞

A recurring but widely misunderstood theme in Tanach is *idolatry*. The Torah's plain injunction "*Do not serve idols*" forbids turning wood or stone into a g-d, and the Prophets repeatedly censured the people of Israel for this grave sin—from Joshua's day until the era when the First Temple fell.

Many thus conclude that those wayward generations rejected the entire Torah, as do modern apostates. This, however, is incorrect; Heaven forbid that this is so. Rather, they observed most practical commandments but neglected the *duties of the heart*. Even King Ahab, a zealous idolater, observed the law that a leper "*shall dwell alone*" (II Kings 7:3; Leviticus 13:46) and, at another occasion, risked his life rather than surrender a Torah scroll (Sanhedrin 102b).

Why was idolatry so alluring? Because the prestige and luxury of surrounding nations were bound to cults of Ba'al, Ashtarot, and the like. The people of Israel, wishing to fit in, followed suit—"We shall be like the nations... and serve wood and stone" (Ezekiel 20:32).

That craving to assimilate violated the divine charge, "*I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine*" (Leviticus 20:26). As *Torat Kohanim* warns (Sifra, Kedoshim 4:9): if you keep apart from the nations, you are His; if you refuse to do so, you belong to Nebuchadnezzar—may G-d spare us.

It was breaching this boundary that caused them to be sentenced to the Temple's destruction, plague, sword, famine, and exile. Shattering this principle of His will incurred the divine fury, as Ezekiel (ch. 23) relates at length...

Parshat Beshalach - The Cause of Auto-antisemitism

and full of novel Torah insights.

When Shabbat was over, Rava made *havdalah*, marking Shabbat's close, over an overfilled cup of wine, and mentioned the four distinctions: *"Who separates between holy and profane, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six days of work."*

This wording of *havdalah* was, in fact, established as the halachically prescribed text of *havdalah*.

Rabbi David Abudraham explains (*Seder Tefillat Arvit* for *Motza'ei Shabbat*) that three of these four distinctions are written in the Torah:

Between holy and profane, as it is said: *"to distinguish between the sacred and the profane"* (Leviticus 10:10).

Between light and darkness, as it is said: *"And G-d*

separated the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:4).

Between Israel and the nations, as it is said: *"And I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine"* (Leviticus 20:26).

These last words—*"And I have set you apart... to be Mine"*—are essentially the ultimate purpose of our mission in this world, as we will elaborate:³

As is well known, our holy Sages instituted several categories of blessings, such as blessings over pleasure, blessings of thanksgiving, blessings over commandments, etc.

The formula of the various blessings is called the *matbei'a bracha* (the established set of the text of the blessing), and for blessings over commandments, this text includes: *"...asher kid'shanu be'mitzvotav"*—"Who has sanctified us with His commandments." Thus, by performing the mitzvah, we, as it

 *Wellsprings of Wisdom* 

3. The following excerpt is from the booklet *Perakim Yesodiyim BeTanya*

(*"Fundamental Chapters in Tanya,"* in *Ma'ayanotecha*, p. 198).

Parshat Beshalach - The Cause of Auto-antisemitism

were, join with G-d in a bond that is called *kiddushin* (betrothal).

We find the same concept in *Shir HaShirim* (the Song of Songs).

Song of Songs, which likens the relationship between the people of Israel and G-d to the relationship between a lover and his beloved, also expresses the wondrous union that exists between us and G-d at the time of performing the commandments—as a man and woman who enter a covenant of *kiddushin* (betrothal) and unite into one.

At the time of Torah study and fulfillment of the commandments, a Jew unites with G-d in his entire being—that is, with his *nefesh Elokit* (divine soul), with his *nefesh beheimit* (animal soul), and with his thought, speech, and action.

In fact, this oneness is even deeper and more essential than the bond between a man and a woman. The word *kid'shanu* (“sanctified us”) is meant to express the lofty state in which a person's soul abides at the time of performing a mitzvah.

“Kedusha” (holiness) connotes separateness and distinction. G-d's holiness is the divine light that is separate from the worlds and transcends them; it does not contract into them or reveal itself within them. It is the light that “encompasses all worlds.”

When a person performs a mitzvah, his soul unites with G-d and is included within His light, and it ascends to the level of holiness that lies beyond the bounds of the worlds. Therefore, the Torah says: “*You shall be holy to Me, for I, G-d, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be Mine*” (Leviticus 20:26). Just as G-d is holy and separate from the world, so too does the sanctification that results from the performance of commandments separate the people of Israel from the mundane world.

By elevating the soul to the level of holiness and merging it with G-d, the soul becomes attached to G-d: “*And you shall do all My commandments and be holy to your G-d—I am G-d*

your G-d" (Numbers 15:40–41)... The act of performing a mitzvah causes G-d's Name to be called upon us, just as He is called "*the G-d of Abraham, the G-d of Isaac, and the G-d of Jacob.*"

Their attachment to G-d was so deep that they became a vehicle—a chariot—for G-d, Who dwelled within them and revealed Himself through them,

and the same is with every Jew who performs a mitzvah, who becomes, at that moment, connected to G-d and a chariot for the divine light that is revealed through him...⁴

Therefore, one should rise in the presence of a person at the moment he is performing a mitzvah—because at that moment, G-d is revealed and

••• Wellsprings of Wisdom •••

4. Rabbi Meir Gerlitz Shlita recounts
(HaMevaser Torani 180, p. 39):

The holy Baal Shem Tov sat among his disciples, deep in thought in the upper worlds. His eyes fixed on some hidden distance, and his face radiated intense devotion. The room, full of his devoted disciples, lay in hushed anticipation.

A spark lit his features. "From Heaven it has been revealed," he said, "that a certain Jew serves the Creator with such pure devotion that he has become a chariot for the Shechinah. I have been shown his location and wish to see him."

They set out by wagon and soon reached wide pastures. "We have arrived," declared the Baal Shem Tov. Scattered sheep lay motionless under the noon sun. "Where there are sheep, there is a shepherd," he murmured.

A piercing flute-blast shattered the calm. Following the sound, they saw a shepherd atop a rock, eyes lifted to the sky, flute in hand. The Baal Shem Tov signaled the disciples to observe in silence.

"Master of the Universe!"—the cry burst from the shepherd's lips—"You created the heavens, the earth, and all that they contain, together with every human being upon them. You also fashioned my master, and all his flock and possessions are Yours. You provide and sustain all, and my food and very life are given to me by Your hand.

The shepherd continued, addressing G-d, "You have made for Yourself a single chosen people, that they might recognize all Your goodness and praise and exalt You. I, too, Your lowly servant, am counted among that holy nation.

"But what am I to do," the shepherd lowered his gaze, and his voice

shining through him, and his soul is serving as a garment and vessel for the Divine light.

Since this is the central point of a Jew's service—"to be Mine," which, as stated, is accomplished through "*I have set you apart from the nations*"—the forces of impurity and the *sitra achra* (the "Other Side," forces of evil) fight with all their might to uproot this point of distinction that exists within every single Jew...

A Jew who does not know the mystery and purpose of his creation and the reason for this lifelong battle may falter in this war and begin to idolize the culture of the nations of the world... And the more the admiration within him grows, the more the forces of impurity will dominate him; and the more the forces of impurity overpower him, the more he will begin to feel uncomfortable in the company of

••• *Wellsprings of Wisdom* •••

cracked, "for I was orphaned as a child, and there was no one to teach me to pray before You or to fulfill Your commandments. The village master took me into his house to work for him, and thus, I grew up without knowledge or understanding."

Then the shepherd lifted his voice and cried out fervently: "Yet so powerful is my desire to serve You as do my fellow Jews ! And I do not know how... Therefore, I shall play my flute before You, and may this give You delight." He sounded a long, powerful blast and played deep and haunting melodies until his breath failed and he collapsed in exhaustion.

Regaining strength, he lamented, "What is such service worth to You ? I am no more than an ignoramus." Then, seeking

to offer one more offering before G-d, he leapt down and rolled over and over on the ground until exhausted.

Still unsure of his worth, he remembered a gift: "Last night, my master gave each assistant a coin. It is all I own, and I give it to You, my dear G-d !" With that, he flung the coin skyward.

The disciples gasped as a fiery hand descended from heaven and seized the coin. Yet the shepherd pressed on: "The future reward due to me—dearer than any worldly treasure—I give that to You as well !"

A tear glimmered in the Ba'al Shem Tov's eye. He and his disciples now understood why this humble shepherd had indeed become a chariot for the Shechinah.

Parshat Beshalach - Balaam's Perception of the Jews

his own Jewish brothers and his people... until in the end, he may fall ill with the vicious disease of auto-antisemitism...

Now that we have uncovered the root of the problem—"admiration for the culture

of the gentiles and the desire to imitate them"—let us now seek a solution to the problem...

But first, let us leap forward and discuss for a moment the Torah portion of Balak...

Balaam's Perception of the Jews

After the people of Israel finished conquering the lands east of the Jordan (the territories of Sichon and Og), they continued on their journey and arrived at the plains of Moab. There they stopped to rest—the Mishkan was erected, the tents were set up, and the sheep and cattle went out to graze...

The Moabites woke up in the morning, and before their eyes lay an enormous encampment of tents.

Large groups of people gathered in the town centers. *What will be ?*

The Israelites have arrived... What will happen to us ?

A reassuring voice was heard: *There's nothing for you to worry about; their G-d forbade them from harassing us; we are safe here... There's nothing to fear...*⁵

Although everyone saw the enormous Israelite camp, the Torah points out: "*Balak son of Tzippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites*" (Numbers 22:2). We may ask the question: did only Balak see? Everyone saw what Israel did to Sichon and Og!

∞ Wellsprings of Wisdom ∞

5. To quote Nachmanides (Numbers 22:3): "Moab knew that Israel would not seize their land from them, because they had sent [messengers] to them just

as they had sent to Sihon... alternatively, they had also heard the prohibition of G-d, who said to them: 'Do not harass Moab' (Deuteronomy 2:9)".

The holy Kabbalist Rabbi Natan Neta Shapira, of saintly memory, explained:⁶

“And Balak son of Tzippor saw” – there are two types of vision. There is physical sight, and there is mental perception. The main superiority of Man is specifically in mental perception, as our Sages said (Tamid 32a): “Who is wise ? One who foresees the future.”

Balak was a very wise man with very powerful abilities. When he saw with his *physical sight* the supernatural success of the people of Israel, he stopped to contemplate this matter with his *mental perception*: *What is the secret of their strength ?*

It was divinely revealed to him that the strength of the people of Israel derives from their connection to G-d— a connection that is reinforced and intensified each time a Jew says the words: “*Shema Yisrael, Hashem Eloheinu,*

Hashem Echad” (“Hear, O Israel: G-d is our G-d, G-d is One”).

This being so, he understood that if he wanted to uproot and decimate the people of Israel, he first had to weaken, as much as he could, the power of their connection to the divine – the connection created by the sacred words of “*Shema Yisrael.*”

To quote the *Megaleh Amukot*: “*The wicked one (Balak) sought to uproot from them the recitation of Shema, which is composed of 25 letters.*”

The *Megaleh Amukot* elaborates and explains that Balak’s intent was to uproot from the people of Israel their connection to their Father in Heaven. That way, even if the people of Israel cried out “*Shema Yisrael*” all day long, it wouldn’t help them—because the connection would have been severed...

Balak understood that he himself did not have the power

Parshat Beshalach - Balaam's Perception of the Jews

to sever the bond. Therefore, he sent messengers to summon Balaam, the son of Beor: “*I hear that you’re a professional at destroying things. Come, destroy for me the bond between the Creator and His beloved children.*”

Balaam arrived and tried with all his might to destroy the bond—but he did not succeed. Not only was their connection not severed; on the contrary, it was strengthened even more and publicized for all to see. As it is said: “*Balaam saw that it pleased G-d to bless Israel...*”

(Numbers 24:1)

In Parashat Balak, the Torah goes on at length, recording Balaam's words, from which we see the extent of his perception and wisdom.

In a lecture delivered by Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Kluger Shlita, he posed the following question:⁷

In Parashat Balak, we find that Balaam the wicked, in his prophecy, spoke about many virtues that are unique to Israel:

The acceptance of the yoke of Heaven (Rashi on Numbers 23:24), *tzitzit* and *tefillin* (ibid.), forbidden mixtures and the Red Heifer (ibid. 23:10). He was also aware of the sanctity of the festivals (ibid. 24:8), of the secret of the dwelling of the holy *Shechinah* among Israel (ibid. 23:21), and he even grasped the secret of the Holy Temple (ibid. 24:5).

Yet despite all this, he did not mention Shabbat at all. This, however, is surprising. When the Torah was given to Israel, all of the kings of the nations of the world gathered and came to Balaam the wicked and asked him, “*What is this commotion that we have heard?*” He answered them: “*The Holy One, blessed be He, has a precious treasure in His treasury that has been hidden by Him for 974*

Parshat Beshalach - Manna–Heavenly Bread

generations before the world was created, and He wishes to give it to His children” (Zevachim 116a).

Thus, although Balaam was not present at Mount Sinai, he attained—by way of prophecy—knowledge of the secret of the giving of the Torah, and he also knew that the Torah is “a precious treasure from G-d’s treasury.”

Why then did he not also know about Shabbat, which is described in a similar manner: “*I have a good gift in My treasury, and its name is Shabbat*” (Shabbat 10b)?

Furthermore, Shabbat is an aspect of the future time; as our

Sages have said (Berachot 57b), Shabbat is one-sixtieth of the World to Come. Balaam, in his final prophecy, spoke about what will happen “*at the end of days*” in the Messianic era (Rashi on Numbers 24:19). He also knew by prophecy things hidden from the other prophets, as recorded in Targum Yonatan (Numbers 24:3): “*Balaam son of Beor said... the hidden mysteries that were concealed from [other] prophets were revealed to him.*”

All this being the case, why did Balaam not mention Shabbat in his words ? !

Before we answer this question, let us turn to this week’s parasha...

Manna–Heavenly Bread

This Shabbat, we will read Parashat Beshalach. Toward the end of the parasha, we learn about the *manna* that descended for the people of Israel. Let us elaborate:

On Thursday, the 15th of Nissan in the year 2448 to Creation, the people of Israel

went out from Egypt; they also took along with them provisions for the journey—bread and water.

After thirty days, on the 15th of Iyar—which fell on Shabbat—the people of Israel arrived at the Desert of Zin, and their bread supply ran out. The

Parshat Beshalach - Manna—Heavenly Bread

children came to their parents and begged for food...

The people of Israel panicked and immediately approached Moses and Aaron and complained: *"If only we had died in Egypt, during the plague of Darkness, with our brothers who perished then by the hand of G-d! For those slain by the sword are better than those slain by hunger; there is nothing as terrible as dying of hunger! If only we had died in Egypt—we wouldn't be experiencing these pangs of hunger! Why, then, did you bring us out to this wilderness to die of hunger?!"*

The Holy One, blessed be He, heard their complaint and said to Moses: "They are behaving according to the ways of flesh and blood, and they complain. But I will act with great patience, and withhold My anger. Go and tell them: Starting tomorrow, on Sunday (the 16th of Iyar), I will rain down upon them bread from heavenly treasures... Each

morning, I will present them with bread, with love and joy..."

Early in the morning, a northern wind would blow and sweep through the camp of Israel. After that, rain would fall and wash the earth. Next, dew would rise up from the ground, and wind would blow upon it, arranging it like tables of gold. Upon these "tables," the *manna* would then descend. Then, above it, an additional layer of dew would come down to shield the manna and guard it from worms and insects.

Thus, it was as if the manna lay inside a sealed, protected box! Then, when the sun came up, the dew would rise up and evaporate in the sunlight—as dew naturally does—and the *manna* would be revealed: fine and flaky, as frost upon the earth.

The first time the *manna* fell, the children of Israel had no idea of its nature. "*Man hu?*" they asked one another—meaning, *What is it?* Moses hurried to explain that this is the bread that

Parshat Beshalach - Manna-Heavenly Bread

G-d is giving His people—a mighty bread, exalted and lofty.

Moses further conveyed to the people of Israel G-d's command that they may gather of the *manna* as much as they please—some gathered more, some less—but "know," he told them, "that when you arrive home, you will find you have an omer (one-tenth of an eifah) per person, no more, no less!"

Moses went on to instruct the people of Israel not to leave over any of the *manna* until morning and to trust that the Holy One, blessed be He, would provide their food on the following day as well.

For five days—from Sunday, the 16th of Iyar, until Thursday, the 20th of Iyar—the *manna* fell in the same pattern. Then, on Friday, the people of Israel went out to gather the manna as usual, but when they returned to their tents, they were astonished by what they saw... Each person found a double amount of manna in their vessels !

The leaders of the community hurried to approach Moses to tell him of this wonder and to ask: "*Why is this day different from the past few days ?*"

Moses replied to them: "The Holy One, blessed be He, told me: 'the seventh day of each week will be a day of *Shabbaton*, *Shabbat Kodesh*—a holy Shabbat day of complete rest.'"

"Which day might that be ?" the leaders asked.

Moses answered: "*Tomorrow* is the holy Shabbat day of rest. Therefore, today, you must bake and cook all that you plan for Shabbat, since on Shabbat itself, these labors are forbidden..."

As recorded in the Torah, Moses said to them: "*See, G-d has given you the Shabbat; therefore, He gives you two days' food on the sixth day. Let everyone remain where they are; let no one go out from their place on the seventh day*"

(Exodus 16:29).

To better explain this verse, we need to preface with some background...

The Seventh String of the Harp

In a discourse delivered by Rabbi Shamshon Hirsch of blessed memory, he said the following (*Matana Tova*, p. 97):

This world that we inhabit, which was created in the six days of Genesis, is a material world. Coarse materiality spread its wings over the earth and brought it under its dominion. *“The heavens are the heavens of G-d—but the earth He has given to mankind”* (Psalms 115:16). The world of materiality says: Only there, in Heaven, is there room for holiness and only there is the seat of G-d’s glory; but here on earth, there is no place for holiness or for Him at all.

But this is not according to the will and desire of the Creator and Master. G-d has no desire for a world empty of holiness. Without holiness, the earth would mourn, and all who dwell in it would be miserable; it would wither away and utterly collapse.

G-d’s will is that an unceasing connection with the world is maintained so that His holiness extends over the whole world until no place is devoid of it. Moreover, He desires and yearns to have a dwelling among the lowly—that His Presence should abide not merely in the heavens above but on the earth below as well.

Therefore, G-d included, along with the six days of Creation—during which the material universe was completed—the seventh day, the holy Shabbat, on which He finished and completed His world.

By virtue of the sanctity of Shabbat with which Creation was crowned, a person can become holy and sanctify himself and all that is his, and elevate everything from the darkness of materiality to the lights of the supreme holiness, according to the will of the Creator.

The Holy One, blessed be He, created a partner for Shabbat—the

Parshat Beshalach - The Exalted Mystery of Shabbat

people of Israel—and brought them together into an everlasting covenant. From then on, the two (Israel and Shabbat) became one entity together with G-d!

G-d gave Israel the power to increase holiness in the world: to sanctify time with the sanctity of Shabbat, to sanctify places and material things, and to progressively add and elevate in holiness—holiness above holiness—up to the highest level. In this manner, G-d descends from His lofty heights and chooses to rest His Presence among the children of Israel. This supreme holiness endures forever and can never become desecrated or altered in any circumstance or situation...

The Exalted Mystery of Shabbat

Moses turns to the people of Israel and says to them: “*See, G-d has given you the Shabbat*” (Exodus 16:29) – G-d has revealed to you, and only to you, the secret of Shabbat...

There are two levels in the concept of a “secret”:

The world is like a harp of six strings. Each day of the six days of Creation added one string to the harp of Creation to sound a song of praise to the Creator. But still, its sound was not sweet to Him, and He did not find contentment in them—until He added the seventh string, the Shabbat, and with it, the world symphony was completed and became pleasurable to G-d, and He rejoiced in His works.

As time went on, the sound of the seventh string was drowned out by the noise of the six strings, and G-d therefore, created a new creation – the people of Israel – and joined them to the seventh string...

The first level is when the matter is hidden from the intellect; the second level is when the matter is hidden from the emotions.

Now, the secret of Shabbat belongs to the realm of feeling. The light of Shabbat is revealed in the emotions.

Parshat Beshalach - The Exalted Mystery of Shabbat

To you, and only to you, did the Holy One, blessed be He, grant the ability to feel the sanctity of Shabbat! Fortunate are you who have merited this!

Even Balaam—with all the enormous spiritual attainments he had—could not grasp the concept of Shabbat!

In the words of Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Kluger, Shlita:⁸

Despite all of Balaam the Wicked's attainments in the Torah of Israel, he had no knowledge whatsoever of the secret of Shabbat! For Shabbat is one and the same with the secret of Israel's holiness—it is a time of love between them and G-d, as it is said: “*Between Me and the children of Israel*”

(Exodus 31:17).

The holy Or HaChaim described this mystery (ibid., v. 16):

“*Between Me and the children of Israel*” – the secret of these matters shall remain

between Me and the children of Israel; no one else in the world will know of them! This is what our Sages of blessed memory meant (Beitzah 16a) when they said: “*The extra soul [of Shabbat] I did not make known to them*,” for G-d has no desire that the nations should know the loftiest secrets of the living G-d...

Therefore, the Torah goes on to say: “*It is a sign forever that in six days G-d made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He ceased and rested*” (Exodus 31:17). If the nations of the world come and ask: “*Why is one day different from any other? What makes Shabbat distinct from the other days?*”

You shall answer them—just to calm them—“*Because for six days... and on the seventh day He ceased.*” For they, the nations of the world, are not capable of grasping more than that. But you, the children of

Parshat Beshalach - Never to Be Sold into Slavery

Israel, have merited that the true reason be revealed to you—the reason that is hidden and sealed in the highest realms !

It is precisely because the essential nature of Shabbat is internal and hidden that its concept was concealed from Balaam. For the people of Israel's holiness does not depend on their attainments, intellectual or otherwise: a gentile—even one of the righteous among the nations of the world—is, at the end of the day, still a *gentile* ! Whereas a Jew—even if he has sinned and greatly blemished himself—is, after all is said and done, still a Jew !

This brings us to the secret of the *yichud* (intimate union) of Shabbat, which is like a hidden inner chamber: “*Between Me and the children of Israel.*” For this reason, the halacha is that a gentile who keeps Shabbat is liable for death !

Never to Be Sold into Slavery

In Parashat Ki Tavo, ninety-eight curses are listed.

Our Sages say in the Midrash (Devarim Rabbah, Parasha 1, §21) that when a king and queen sit and converse with one another, if someone comes and sticks his nose between them, he is liable for death ! So, too, Shabbat is *between* the people of Israel and G-d, and any gentile who inserts himself between them is liable for death !

Since Balaam did not perceive the secret of Shabbat, he failed in all his schemes, and all his curses were transformed into blessings: “*But G-d your L-rd refused to heed Balaam; instead, G-d your L-rd turned the curse into a blessing for you, for G-d your L-rd loves you*” (Deuteronomy 23:6).

In closing, let us return to search for the solution to the problem: How can we remove from ourselves the “admiration for the culture of the gentiles and the desire to imitate them”?

One of them is: “*G-d will send you back to Egypt in ships, by*

Parshat Beshalach - Never to Be Sold into Slavery

the route of which I said to you, 'You shall not see it again'; and there you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as slaves and maids, but none will buy" (Deuteronomy 28:68).

Taken at face value, this verse is difficult to comprehend. Will the honor of Israel be so abased that no one will want them even as slaves or maids ? !

In Roshei Besamim (Parashat Ki Tavo, s.v. "Veheshivcha"), Rabbi Yeshayah Mushkat, of blessed memory, writes as follows:

My father-in-law, Rabbi Yitzchak of Radovill, of blessed memory, related that when he studied Torah and came to this verse, he felt he had no strength to continue. "How could it be," he wondered, "that the people of Israel would reach such a depth of degradation?"

He wept before G-d for several hours, begging, "Please, illuminate my eyes with the light of Your Torah..."

Soon, his holy father, Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov, of

blessed memory, came to him from the upper world and said to him as follows:

Surely you know that the Holy One, blessed be He, referred to Nebuchadnezzar with the title "My servant," as it is said: "And say to them: Thus said G-d of Hosts, the G-d of Israel—Here I am sending for My servant, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon"

(Jeremiah 43:10).

The holy Gemara (Sanhedrin 105a) relates (slightly paraphrased):

Resh Lakish said: What is the meaning of that which is written, "Nebuchadnezzar My servant"? Could it be that this wicked man is worthy of the title "My servant" ? !

Rather, it was revealed and known before G-d that the people of Israel were destined to be delivered into his hand. Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, preemptively called him "His servant." Since the law is that whatever a servant acquires, his master acquires—automatically, even

Parshat Beshalach - Never to Be Sold into Slavery

when the people of Israel will be under the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar, they will not be able to cast off the yoke of Heaven (claiming that they are no longer servants of the Creator)—for even now (in the exile of Nebuchadnezzar) they remain under the authority of Nebuchadnezzar's 'master' – the Holy One, blessed be He.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel went on to explain: This, too, is the meaning of the verse: "You shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as slaves and maids, and no one will buy." When the captors offer the children of Israel as slaves, everyone will jump at the chance, and they will fight and quarrel over who will gain the privilege of acquiring a Jewish slave.

But, says the Torah, know that those gentiles who acquire you are themselves My slaves and maids (says G-d), and therefore "no one will buy"—they will have no true ownership over you at all! (Thus far, the words of the Roshei Besamim.)

The Torah declares before the people of Israel an encouraging message: Know that even if, Heaven forbid, you are sold as slaves and maids—deep inside, you will always remain free people!

Returning to our subject, we bring a discourse delivered by Rabbi Mordechai Yissachar Ber, the Rebbe of Pittsburgh, of blessed memory (*Pitgamei Orayta* – Shabbat, p. 321):

Sometimes, a person feels that he has already fallen under the dominion of the evil inclination and has been captured by it, and he is entangled in transgressions. Even when he wants to think about doing teshuvah, it may seem in his eyes as if teshuvah is beyond reach, Heaven forbid—because he imagines that he has left G-d's jurisdiction and is under the jurisdiction of the *sitra achra*. If so, how can he rescue and relieve his soul from them, to escape their domain and control and return to G-d's domain?

The answer to this concern is understood based on the above:

In reality, even sin itself, even the evil inclination and the forces of the *sitra achra*—all are situated and subjugated under the dominion of the Holy One, blessed be He. Even if, G-d forbid, a person descends to the lowest depths, and it is as if he has been “sold,” so to speak, to the forces of evil—he still remains under the authority and rule of the

Holy One, blessed be He.

Even someone cast off can return in repentance, and his hope is not lost—for, after all, no matter what, he is always still truly under the domain of the Holy One, blessed be He !

The inner essence of a Jew is forever free—free from the dominion of the nations of the world, free from the dominion of impurity, free from anyone who might seek to dominate it.

The inner essence of a Jew is elevated and exalted above all of Creation; it is literally a part of G-d above. As such, a Jew has no reason in the world to admire or idolize the culture of the gentiles, which is hollow and empty—immeasurably inferior to the inner and sanctified essence of the Jew.

Every Shabbat, the part of G-d above that resides in the Jewish soul is revealed — the awe-inspiring union “*Between Me and the children of Israel*” (Exodus 31:17). It allows him to appreciate reality properly – to know that he belongs to G-d. Through this knowledge he is elevated and uplifted above all of Creation, “*and I have set you apart from the nations to be Mine !*”

When a Jew keeps Shabbat properly according to halacha, a genuine and holy Jewish pride is then revealed in his soul !



Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. This world that we inhabit, which was created in the six days of Genesis, is a material world—a world in which coarse materiality rules with a high hand. However, since G-d has no desire for a world devoid of holiness, and He desires and yearns to have a dwelling among the lowly and that His Presence should primarily reside on earth, He therefore created the day of Shabbat.

2. Every Shabbat, the part of G-d above that resides in the Jewish soul is revealed—the awe-inspiring point of union, “*Between Me and the children of Israel*,” and it allows him to appreciate reality properly: to know that he belongs to G-d. It is by this knowledge he is elevated and uplifted above the entirety of Creation, “*and I have set you apart from the nations to be Mine!*”

3. Every Shabbat is akin to a marriage between each individual Jew and the holy Shabbat—for the people of Israel are akin to the spouse of Shabbat. Just as every wedding has three stages—*kiddushin* (betrothal) under the chuppah, the joy of the wedding feast, and finally, the *yichud* (intimate union) of the bride and groom in their home—similarly, our holy Rabbis, the Men of the

Great Assembly (*Anshei Knesset HaGedolah*), instituted three distinct prayers on Shabbat that correspond to these three levels.

4. Just as every groom is obligated to provide his bride with *she'er* (food), *kesut* (clothing), and *onah* (conjugal relations), so too, each member of Israel is obligated to provide the holy Shabbat, his partner, with these three things:

"She'er" – meaning that one should take pains to prepare, in honor of Shabbat, tasty and delicious foods, and "increase in meat and wine and delicacies according to his means" in order to delight the Shabbat.

"Kesut" – meaning that "he should endeavor to have fine garments for Shabbat." It is fitting and proper that a person not wear weekday garments on Shabbat; rather, he should have special garments for Shabbat—a special hat for Shabbat, special shoes for Shabbat, etc. "Everything, insofar as possible, should be designated for Shabbat," and through this, a special spiritual light will shine upon his clothing.

"Onah" – meaning that one should, as much as possible, spend time on Shabbat engaged in the holy Torah

Parshat Beshalach - Summary and Practical Conclusions

and in the divine service through prayer. Likewise, one should sing melodies, hymns, and praises to G-d at the Shabbat table. It is very much advisable to complete all of the Mishnah Tractate Shabbat during the three Shabbat meals (it includes 24 chapters—eight chapters are thus recited at each meal). This is a tried-and-true *segulah* (auspicious practice) to derive much satisfaction from the children, especially concerning observance of Shabbat.

5. Every person should make the most of the Shabbat table as an opportunity to instill in his family *Yirat Shamayim* (fear of G-d), good character traits, and purity and sanctity — by including the children in the Shabbat *zemirot* (hymns), telling them stories of *tzaddikim* (righteous people), and by sharing words of Torah that draw the heart.

6. Great is the power of Shabbat to shield every Jew who keeps it properly. In our days – the days of *ikveta de-Meshicha* (the "footsteps of Moshiach") when the birth pangs of Moshiach (*chevlei haMashiach*) are growing ever more intense and many troubles and harsh decrees are befalling the people of Israel, both from within and from without – great indeed is the power of Shabbat to sweeten all judgments Above and to bring about our redemption with kindness and mercy.

7. This is also what Chazal (our Sages of blessed memory) meant by saying: "*If Israel would only keep two Shabbatot properly, they would immediately be redeemed.*" That is, the merit of Shabbat not only brings the Redemption closer, but it also—and mainly—ensures that its arrival will take place with kindness and mercy.

Shabbat Shalom!





WEEKLY ENGLISH ZOOM CLASS

with
RABBI ISRAEL ABARGEL shlita

**FOLLOWED BY Q&A
EVERY SUNDAY**

California Time - 08:00 AM

Colorado Time - 09:00 AM

Florida Time - 11:00 AM

Israel Time - 18:00 PM



www.zoom.us/j/4459755725

For details:

 **(347) 352 - 8125**



New!

On the tenth anniversary of the passing of our teacher and master,
Rabbi Yoram Abergel, of blessed memory.

New and rare books from his teachings have been published:



❖ Beshir Yarum ❖

A treasure of articles on awe of G-d
With striking stories and parables
On Shir HaShirim, the Song of Songs,
Arranged from the lessons of our
teacher, of blessed memory

❖ Yarum Meshalo ❖

Parables and pearls of wisdom that were
collected and arranged In a captivating
and heart-winning language
From the lessons of our teacher and leader
Rabbi Yoram Abergel, of blessed memory



❖ Shufrei DeYosef ❖

On the Five Books of the Torah
Sweeter than honey
Composed by the holy kabbalist
Rabbi Yosef HaKohen, of blessed memory
Now published for the first time
In a new and magnificent edition



Hurry to order: 08-931-1785
shop.hameir-laarets.org.il

666 HaKatzir Street, Netivot | +1(347)352-8125



New!

On the tenth anniversary of the passing of our teacher and master,
Rabbi Yoram Abergel, of blessed memory.

New and rare books from his teachings have been published:



❖ Imrei Noam ❖

Shabbat talks of Rabbi Yoram, in a new edition with titles for each discourse, with the addition of 'Amirah Ne'imah'— practical guidance for daily life

❖ Hameir L'Yisrael ❖

Selected lessons interwoven with the holy words of our Sages,
Including guidance and a path in serving Hashem,
And practical tools
For confronting the challenges of our generation.



❖ Betzur Yarum ❖

The "Betzur Yarum" lessons of our teacher of blessed memory,
Now published for the first time,
On the section Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah
From the book Tanya.



Hurry to order: 08-931-1785
shop.hameir-laarets.org.il

666 HaKatzir Street, Netivot | +1(347)352-8125



Shabbat Times Beshalach

13th of Shevat, 5786

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:53 pm	5:55 pm	6:24 pm
Miami	5:45 pm	6:39 pm	7:16 pm
Los Angeles	5:04 pm	6:02 pm	6:35 pm
Montreal	4:40 pm	5:46 pm	6:12 pm
Toronto	5:08 pm	6:12 pm	6:39 pm
London	4:28 pm	5:41 pm	6:00 pm
Jerusalem	4:56 pm	5:47 pm	6:22 pm
Tel Aviv	4:52 pm	5:44 pm	6:18 pm
Haifa	4:50 pm	5:45 pm	6:18 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:54 pm	5:48 pm	6:22 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of
HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

Even after a person has succeeded in overcoming all the difficulties and, with God's help, has merited to become a servant of Hashem, he must be very careful not to grow proud over the fact that he is a servant of Hashem.

For this is the way of the evil inclination: when it does not manage to defeat you in one area, it tries to awaken in you the trait of arrogance - "Where is there anyone else like you in the world?"

And then a person begins to feel: "Now I am a tzaddik; who is like me, who can compare to me?"



Become a Partner!

For Donations:

American Friends of Netivot Inc
980 Broadway St 336 Thornwood, NY 10594

PCSB Bank

Routing- #221970980

Checking- 5151000774

Or Visit: Hameir-Laarets.org.il/Donate
+ (954) 800-6526

RECOGNIZED BY THE IRS AS A 501(c)(3)

TAX DEDUCTIBLE ORGANIZATION



Do You Enjoy Mesilot?

Distribute Pathways to the Soul in
Your Synagogue!

Receive Mesilot Weekly Anywhere Worldwide!

- Free of Charge -

Join Now!



Ask The Rabbi!



Media

hameir-laarets.org.il/en

Hameir Laarets

(954) 800-6526

054-870-8737

en@h-l.org.il

