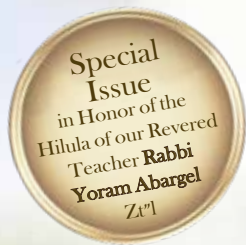


Beit Hamidrash Hameir La'aretz | Issue 127

Bereshit | The Venerated Rabbi Yoram and his Everlasting Legacy



MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parsha
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel זי"ל**

From the weekly talks of his son,
Rabbi Israel Abargel Shlita

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Secret of The Majestic Tree	1
Melting The Ice	2
Don't Forsake the Battlefield	2
Be Sincere... ..	4
The Indestructible Threads of Simplicity	7
An Unbreakable Bond	9
Betzur Yarum - a masterpiece	10
And you Fear of me from Habit and Routine ...	10
'What Troubles You ?'	13
'He will Silence a Raging Storm'	14
I Take Upon Myself to Protect you	15
The Seal of Truth	17
For Rabbi Yoram there were no excuses	20
The Light that Brings them Back	21
In Closing	23
The Pathway... ..	25



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Parshat Bereshit

The Secret of The Majestic Tree

Near the desert sands, adjacent to the plowed fields, somewhere in the south of Israel, grew a tree of enormous size, its leafy foliage reaching the heavens. Its blessed fruits were enjoyed by all, both the poor and the rich – it was accessible to everyone. Its leaves cast shade everywhere, even over distant cities and countries. However, it never forgot where its roots drew nourishment and strength from and the secret of its success.

Our revered and outstanding father and teacher Rabbi Yoram Michael combined into one whole: natural simplicity and humility, and the nobility of a Torah sage on the other.

These elements merged with each other, acquired a unique taste, and like aged wine, nothing could compare... anyone who tasted it couldn't bear any other, there was nothing like it.

It is not surprising, then, that his fame spreads to every corner of the earth, his words and charm renowned in every village and town in Israel and the diaspora. They are like drops of reviving dew for thousands of people worldwide, like cool waters for a weary soul.

Currently, we find ourselves at the beginning of a new year, eight years following the passing of our father the esteemed and beloved Rabbi Yoram Michael Zt"l on the 27th of Tishrei, 5776.

It is difficult to speak about our father in the past tense because, in truth, the Righteous even after their passing, are called "alive". All who are connected to them are bound to the Tree of Life, for they showed us what true life is – a life of faith and love for the Creator, of love for one's neighbor and charity, of holiness and joy

Parshat Bereshit - Melting The Ice

according to the Torah. All of this continues to grow and flourish thanks to the seeds sown

by our father during his 58 years of life in this physical world.

Melting The Ice

Life by his side was a wellspring of holiness, and everything related to the "other side" was foreign to him. The icy irreverence of the kelipot, which hinders the soul's full radiance, molted from his fire of love for the Creator, the Torah and its commandments, and from his love for a fellow Jew.

Whenever he noticed an empty place devoid of life, far or

near, he sought an opportunity to fill it with the light of faith, Torah, and reverence for the Creator.

Regarding Kalba Savua it is said that anyone who entered his home as hungry as a dog left satiated and content (Gittin 56a). About our father, it can be said that anyone who came to him dejected and gloomy, left uplifted and inspired, radiant with vitality and joy.

Don't Forsake the Battlefield

"For man is the tree of the field" (Deuteronomy 20:19), similar to a tree, a person strives to constantly grow spiritually. There are the few fortunate ones who materialize their potential and reach great heights. However, often, their environment does not grow together with them, and the gap between them and those around them widens.

On the other hand, true

Gedolei Yisrael, after ascending to the summit of the mountain of Hashem, always look to elevate the people around them too. They don't forsake the soldiers on the battlefield to their fate...

As the holy Ohr HaChaim writes in his commentary on the book of Leviticus: "The redemption will come when the Righteous awaken the hearts of

the masses saying to them, 'do you really prefer to sit outside, being cast away from the table of our Father? And what pleasure do you derive from this world if you do not partake from the table of our Father, the Master of the world.

The Righteous will cause the masses to cast away their illusory desires, and awaken in them a yearning for the spiritual, causing them to rectify their actions, thus freeing them from captivity. The Creator will seek retribution from those sages of Israel who do not do so; He will demand retribution for the disgrace of His House..."

"Shake off the dust, arise..." is a call to the Righteous throughout their lives.

The impression the Righteous leave in every place they step, lasts even after they depart to the Heavenly academy. It instills in one's soul a desire to shake off everything material and ascend a level higher.

Anyone who attended father's lessons and listened attentively could feel their soul awakening,

inspiring them to shake off all earthly concerns, if only for a brief moment. The true reality was revealed in all its glory.

As is well known, the words of Or HaChaim were constantly on father's lips. In his lessons, he could quote entire passages verbatim, without consulting a book. One of the passages that my father, Rabbi Yoram, often quoted, is the commentary on the first verse of the Torah (Genesis 1:1, Explanation 17): "Our sages of blessed memory said (Berachot 6b): One who fears the Creator, his words are accepted. The reason for this is that he speaks with his soul, and the listener's soul, feeling this, is ready to accept even words of admonition. On the other hand, if the words come from 'the body', a soul will not be ready to accept."

These words fit perfectly to our father, whose words were like a holy ball of fire, erupting from his pure heart with simplicity and sincerity, emanating from the seal of the Al-mighty, whose name is 'Truth'.

A Torah scholar who was close to many Righteous individuals, once said, that in father's lessons, one could feel the emanation of the ten sefirot shining in his words.

Before we continue, it is worth understanding what true simplicity and sincerity are and why they are so important.

Be Sincere...

In our opening words, we talked about the secret of simplicity and sincerity. There are many levels to these sacred qualities, and one would be mistaken to believe that such character traits are only inherent

in common people and not in the Righteous and Torah scholars, while indeed, these sacred qualities form the foundation for the expression of the soul. Let's try to clarify a bit with the help of the Al-mighty...¹

Wellsprings of Wisdom

1. The following is from the book 'Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh (Part 5, Chap. 6): The Ramchal in his introduction to Mesilat Yesharim writes: "When common people see someone doing acts of kindness, they cannot avoid suspecting him to be a dullard". In other words, this person is called a simpleton.

This title however is how Ya'akov Avinu was called: "And Ya'akov was a simpleton" (Genesis 25:27), which denotes an advantage.

For in truth there are two kinds of 'simpleness', one which is a negative, which is the result of small mindedness which cannot grasp deeper ideas. The other is a positive and exalted trait of simpleness and sincerity which comes

from the simpleness and purity of the soul. As the verse states: "You shall be whole with G-d your L-rd". This simpleness comes from unity and oneness of the soul.

To explain this concept a bit more: "The L-rd made man upright, yet they seek many calculations" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). To most people it seems that speculating and innovating new ideas in Torah for example, is a worthy endeavor, however often the opposite is true. The truth is that the nature of Man as he was created is to be pure and simple, "upright".

Only after the initial sin of the tree of knowledge did it occur to Man to "seek many calculations". The many calculations, and endless questions and answers are the product of sin, of crookedness. Man has a

The holy Rabbi Klonymus Kalman Shapiro, may the Al-mighty avenge his blood, gathered a group of students before whom he laid out paths to attain holiness, explaining how to focus one's thoughts in service of the Creator. Regarding the qualities of simplicity and sincerity, he writes the following:

"Since the goal of our group is to reveal the soul and empower it over the body, we must accustom ourselves to behavior that contributes to the revelation of the soul and avoid everything that subjugates the soul to the body.

"Act with simplicity and sincerity, for sincerity is the ascension of the soul over the body and its actions, while cunning and deviousness are defects of the soul and are merely governance of

the intellect. Not positive intellect stemming from the soul, rather 'mundane intellect,' i.e., intellect based on norms and habits accepted among ordinary people.

"The seal of the Creator is "Truth," and throughout the world, there are manifestations of it. For example, in a plant, there is the reality of life, a "growing soul," and this is an imprint of Truth. However, a drawing or a mock-up is a lie.

"Truth is an aspect of life, and falsehood is an aspect of death. Truth is reality. Therefore, a person in whose words and actions his soul is present lives by the truth.

"A plant simply grows, without any ulterior motives, only because its "growing soul" drives it to grow and develop. Similarly, a child behaves

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

spark of straightforwardness and sincerity. This spark is where in his persona he will accept things with sincerity and truth. The more one is pure and holy, the more one is sincere

and straightforward. However, one who is distant from spirituality and truth, will seek proofs and arguments and many calculations, thereby losing many opportunities.

simply and honestly in all their actions, in accordance with the reality of the soul. And if an adult person behaves in all their actions only in accordance with the desire of the soul, then they too are simple and truthful. But if they do not behave with the simplicity inherent in the soul, there is no true reality in them or their actions, and they are already considered falsehood...

"The charm of a child is that they are simple and sincere, and when we speak to them, it feels as if we are speaking to their soul. And when we ask them about something, the question penetrates deep into the soul, and we receive a simple and honest answer from the soul. They put their whole heart into their response.

"It does not mean that you should behave thoughtlessly like a child, but only that you should be "simple." For example, if you are asked

about something, do not begin to calculate how it would be more advantageous for you to answer: to appear cultured, answer this way; to appear intelligent, answer that way; to "pull one over" on someone, answer like this. As a result, your answer depends on public opinion, and your soul is absent. There is no reality, no life, no truth here, only falsehood and emptiness.

"Answer seriously, what you genuinely think, simply and clearly. Use your intellect to check whether you are mistaken in your answer. But let your intellect also be straightforward and simple, helping the heart extract its 'pure' potential.

If you see that your answer will harm you, or there is another reason why you cannot give a straightforward answer, you may say, "I don't know," but do not give an insincere and dishonest answer" (Bnei Machshava Tova).

The Indestructible Threads of Simplicity, Sincerity and Honesty

We now, with the help of G-d, understand how important the qualities of integrity and simplicity are, and that it is fundamental rather than secondary, to set us on the path to be a true "servant of G-d". That every thought, word, and action must be the result of the divine simplicity that reveals the soul.

The above mentioned was visible by our father, whose every action was an expression of his divine soul. The colossal strength that was inherent in his personality, as attested to by all who knew him, did not appear out of thin air but had its roots in the path he walked throughout his life.

It was a path that was devoid of all kinds of falsehoods and actions designed to find favor in the eyes of onlookers. Only the crystal-clear truth guided him.

This is the well-trodden path upon which all of our holy forefathers walked, from the day

Hashem created man upon the earth. Unfortunately, over the years, its ways have become desolate, and its gates have been closed. Only the select few will be wise enough to act exclusively with truth and sincerity, solely for the sake of our People.

Those who follow this path are rewarded with the fact that all their fruits are successful and surrounded by holiness, just as it was by our father. The result of the holy service which he planted, stands before us, and we continue to harvest it to this day. Until the coming of the Righteous Redeemer G-d willing, his merit will not cease.

This is the depth of their holy words (Tractate Shabbat 104a): "Truth stands!"

I remember a story that happened several years ago: The daughter of a Chasid who belonged to one of the well-known Chasidic courts, decided to marry a man who, to

put it mildly, did not belong to the Chasidic stream, if at all... The news quickly spread among the Chasidim and reached the Rebbe (Hasidic leader).

The Rebbe, after hearing about the entire case, contemplated it for a long time and reached a clear and resolute conclusion. He told the distraught parents that, unfortunately, there was nothing else to do but distance the disobedient daughter so that others would not follow suit. They must expel her from their home and from the community so that “all the women will be warned and not do so again” (Ezekiel 23:48).

Needless to say, it is not easy for parents to accept such a verdict. The mother, who found it very difficult to accept the ruling, turned in distress to one of the fellow Chasidim who was close to our father.

Father, after carefully considering all the details of the story and the possible consequences with great seriousness, said that, in his opinion, the correct

approach would be to do the opposite: to bring close rather than push away. If they would do so, the daughter and her fiancé would return to the Creator, and the two souls would not be lost.

When the Chassid returned home and thought deeply about father's response, he became restless. He lifted the phone in great concern and called back father, even though it was very late at night. He unfolded in great length, all the dangerous implications that could result from offering a response that contradicts the Rebbe's opinion.

He added, with a touch of concern, that more than he feared for the fate of the parents, he was concerned for the welfare of our father. Therefore, he suggested that father withdraw his ruling.

Father listened attentively to his words, heard them word by word, but at the end of the conversation, he responded with the sentence: “I hear, I understand, but what can I do ?

The answer I gave is the truth, and this is Hashem's will, and if this is Hashem's will, I cannot answer differently."

That was the end of it. Father left no room for doubt.

An Unbreakable Bond

"**The** Al-mighty created man straight, but they desired many schemes" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). In every person, there exists a spark of truth. This spark is a world filled with hidden divinity.

The encounter with the "world" constantly places a person in an ongoing battle. Desires and inclinations sparkle like glitter. Layers of illusions can obscure one's better judgement. The desire to succeed in society can trample over everything in its path: values, ethics, and sometimes even other people. Fear of "what will they say", and "what will they think" causes words and actions of falsehood...

When two people meet, each with the material layers that have formed around them - layers of foreign and selfish considerations

Needless to say, as father had said, so it happened. The "bride's" mother continued to nurture the couple with love, and after some time, the daughter and her husband returned to their roots.

- a true connection between them cannot be formed.

However, when a person is privileged to meet someone in whom inner truth shines, all the shells melt away, and a true connection is formed. Our father was pure and sincere to the utmost, without any external layers. All who saw him and heard him immediately connected to the point of truth within him and felt a sense of peace and trust in him. The words he spoke were like threads of love - "Draw me after you; we will run" (Song of Songs 1:4).

As the holy Rebbe from Piaseczna explains, this spark of truth is sourced and revealed through the traits of simplicity and straightforwardness, both of which were guiding principles of our father.

Betzur Yarum - a masterpiece

One of the extraordinary publications of recent times is the book "Betzur Yarum" of our father Zt"l. It is a treasure trove of the holy words he delivered daily after the morning prayers, with the rising sun.

We have been privileged that these lessons were written down and organized by a team of scholars and G-d-fearing individuals, who father relied upon.

And today, we have the privilege of continuing to spread his teachings in Hameir La'aretz,

including through the brochure that you hold in your hands. Nearly every day, personal stories come to our ears which, together form a great account of how the books of Rabbi Yoram, have changed lives !

In memory of our saintly father and his Torah teachings that he left us after his passing, we share a small collection of stories from the thousands who were privileged to be enriched by the beauty of his Torah, and for whom his words served as a source of spiritual sustenance and life:

And you Fear of me from Habit and Routine

A pious Jew, a resident of a major Torah city in Israel, whose way of life was as befitting a Jew in every aspect - shared that he had a significant issue that troubled his soul and didn't give him rest - his heart was not alive; everything was external and cold, dry and devoid of warmth and vitality, even his smile was forced, if at all...

For those who wonder how one can live like this, the standard response said with despair is, 'What can I say?! - We somehow endure...'

And then, one beautiful day, he came across father's book 'Betzur Yarum'.

From that moment and onward, things took a turn for

the good. He felt that the book was written about him and for him. Every word struck a chord; his soul was drawn to the words of truth, and every sentence felt like invigorating dew.

With strength and determination, he began to guide all aspects of his life according to what was written in the book. In a short time, he began to discover that hidden within him was a deep and unique inner world. Since then, his prayer was no longer the same, his Torah study reached new levels, and the relationship with his wife and children were improved.

Surprisingly enough, he never actually met Rabbi Yoram or knew what he looked like, neither before nor afterward. He knew only one thing - that the Rabbi behind this book (that changed his life) was "Rabbi Abargel," nothing more.

But then the "evil inclination" rolled up its sleeves and went to work. "Listen, what has happened to you?! You don't

even know who stands behind this book. Who can vouch that the things written here are accurate? What if this is all nonsense? You must stop now..."

And suddenly, an idea struck him. He turned to the Creator with a request: "Al-mighty, thanks to Rabbi Abargel's book, I have changed my life. Today, I have become a better person. If this path is correct, I ask for a sign..."

Later that evening, he and his wife decided to take a stroll and have dinner at a restaurant together. His wife unexpectedly decided that she wanted something dairy that evening. "I want pizza!" she declared with a voice that allowed no compromise. (Their exclusive preference was meat).

The husband and wife entered a pizzeria, and right by the entrance, there was a huge portrait of a Rabbi with a radiant face. It was impossible not to notice it. "Excuse me," the husband said to the cashier, "who is this Rabbi?"

"**What ? !** You don't know who this Rabbi is ?" the cashier asked in amazement. "This is Rabbi Abargel from Netivot !"

The astonishment that the husband felt was indescribable. One thing was clear: he had received the sign he had asked for. He could now continue with confidence to follow the ways of father's book.

In reality, this story should not come to us as a surprise. When we engage in the teachings of a righteous person, their lips "whisper from the grave," and the Al-mighty allows them to help their students.

What is most remarkable, every time anew, is that these same words touch the hearts of such varied people, who are so different in character, origin, and social background. All of them feel that the Rabbi is speaking to them personally !

For example, one may find two people sitting side by side, one a well-known Rosh yeshiva, and the other, and individual

who as of yet doesn't keep Shabbat. Yet both will study my father's book, and both feel as though the book was written specifically for them !

This is the power of the "words of the living G-d" said with sincerity and simplicity, which penetrate deep into the heart, piercing through all of the external layers.

One morning after prayer, a religious Jew with a beard and sidelocks approached my father, radiating with joy and excitement: "Dear Rabbi, you see me like this now, but you should know that not long ago, I was spiritually in a deep, deep pit, in the lowest level of impurity. I did all sorts of terrible things ! Honestly, I thought I had no hope left...

"But one day, the Al-mighty had mercy on me, and I came across your book 'Betzur Yarum - Iggeret HaTeshuvah.' After flipping through its pages, I felt a ray of light in my heart, and then I realized that even for a sinner

like me, not everything was lost !
From that moment on, my life

changed, and now I'm here to
express my gratitude to you..."

'What Troubles You?'

To illustrate how favored this book is even to the Baal HaTanya himself (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad; Rabbi Yoram's book is structured as an explanation on the Tanya), let us share the following story:

It was at the beginning of the journey, when the editing of the book ('Betzur Yarum') was only in its first steps.

In those days, the editor of the book used to spend hours at home working on the publication. However, over time, he realized that this important task required a lot of concentration and a settled mind. Therefore, he turned to Rabbi Yoram with a request that he be given a place in the yeshiva to work on the book. And indeed, the request was granted immediately.

However, even in the new place, there were technical issues that required attention

and correction to ensure that his mind was clear and settled to engage in this sacred work.

One day, the Rabbi was invited to a circumcision ceremony. The editor was also present at the ceremony, and like everyone else, he approached after the ceremony to receive a blessing from the Rabbi.

Suddenly, the Rabbi raised his head and looked at the editor with concern. Instead of blessing him, Rabbi Yoram turned to him with a request: 'Could you perhaps tell me what troubles you?'

The editor, who was surprised by the Rabbi's words, recounted all the problems he had encountered in his writing room. The Rabbi asked him to write down all the issues and things that needed correction on a page, and he added that he would take action to address them promptly.

Parshat Bereshit - 'He will Silence a Raging Storm'

The next day, shortly after the editor had handed the note to the Rabbi, an employee responsible for this matter was already standing at the entrance to the writing room, eager to deal with everything that needed attention.

A few days later, when the editor came to express his

gratitude to the Rabbi for addressing the issues, the Rabbi, in his characteristic simplicity, said to him, as he pointed to a picture of the author of the Tanya (Ba'al HaTanya): 'I saw that the author of the Tanya was troubled, so I was compelled to ask you what was troubling you.' "

'He will Silence a Raging Storm'

"About four years ago, a dear friend from the Florida contacted me, a Jewish individual deeply connected to Rabbi Yoram and our holy institutions.

From the other side of the phone line, his concerned voice could be heard: 'Honorable Rabbi, there's a definite forecast of a severe storm heading our way, a storm of destruction. Seven million people have already left the state, the streets that are usually bustling with people have turned desolate, 'large houses without inhabitants, cities without people' (Isaiah 5:9).

'And why aren't you leaving?' I asked.

He mentioned some personal reasons that prevented him from leaving his home.

I asked him, 'Do you have the books of Hameir La'aretz in your home?'

'Of course, Honorable Rabbi,' he replied.

I told him, 'Excellent, take all the volumes of Betzur Yarum and Chelev Haaretz and place them on your Shabbat table. Close the blinds and windows, and be joyful, and every free moment you have, study those books!'

'And... ?' he continued to inquire.

‘That’s it! From here on, remove any worry from your heart. With Hashem’s help, even if the storm heads towards your house, it will only reach up to the courtyard, and no further.’

Three days after that conversation, the mighty storm already appeared on the horizon, moving with tremendous force towards the shores of Miami, reaching Category 5, and its course was already anticipated...

Anyone familiar with Miami knows that it is situated close to the sea...

But here, a miraculous divine occurrence happened. Suddenly, without any warning, the storm’s path sharply veered aside, continuing on a new course, as if someone had

interfered and pushed it aside...

When I visited there three months later for various important events, we stood at the very spot where the storm had occurred. He showed me a video taken from the direction of his house, where you could see, about a hundred meters from his house, a parking lot with nine luxury cars. The wind coming from the sea tossed all the nine cars around like cardboard boxes on the waves. In his backyard however, everything was calm and peaceful, as if these were two separate continents! "They saw the works of Hashem, His wonders in the deep... Let them thank Hashem for His mercy, His wonders to the sons of man

(Psalms 107:24, 31)"

I Take Upon Myself to Protect you

At a special conference for the distributors of Mesilot, held in the month of Sivan 5781, in the 'Atzula' hall in Ashdod, our dear friend Rabbi Alon Nasi Shlita, Rosh Kollel of Hameir La'aretz (in northern Israel), delivered a

sermon. He shared the following story which he heard firsthand:

One of his friends' sons who studies in yeshiva, took upon himself a commitment to study from "Betzur Yarum" every day, with unwavering commitment.

Later that year, his son and a group of seven of his friends went to Meron for Lag Ba'Omer to participate in the great celebration of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

Along with a swarming crowd, his friends made their way to the traditional grand lighting ceremony of the Karlin Chasidim.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, he saw before his eyes, the image of my father Rabbi Yoram in front of him, looking at him and saying, "I take upon myself to protect you!"

Apart from astonishment at the image that revealed itself before his eyes, the yeshiva student was no less surprised by the words of the Rabbi. "What protection is the Rabbi talking about?" he wondered. "I am here by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai; I don't understand what Rabbi Yoram wants from me," he continued to think, puzzled.

A couple of minutes later, the image of my father appeared before him again, repeating, "I take upon myself to protect you!"

In a matter of moments, he found himself pressed into a terrifying crush by the teeming crowds along with all of his friends. Suddenly, he heard an inner voice saying, "Get out of here right now!"

He grabbed one of his friends by the hand and called out to him, "I can't stay here for another moment; I can't breathe!" With tremendous effort, he mustered extraordinary strength and managed to exit along with one more friend, while the rest of his friends remained in that bubble.

Tragically, two of his friends did not survive the disaster...

Upon returning home, the young man told his father, "Father, today I understood who Rabbi Yoram really is, and why he told me "I take upon myself to protect you!"

The Seal of Truth

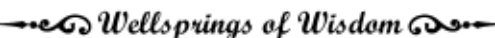
One who is familiar with the teachings of our father Zt"l, especially in the holy book Betzur Yarum, sees that throughout the entire book, appears the demand to recognize the Creator, and serve Him truly and sincerely. This, together with removing all externalities and layers that separate between the heart and the Creator, and as well to honor and follow the path that our holy ancestors walked.

I remember that one of the first discs that circulated from the teachings of father more than a decade ago was titled "The Attribute of Truth." It sparked a revolution among thousands of people. Father delivered a talk for over an hour, speaking exclusively about the quality of truth and the evil of falsehood. He spoke piercing words of the kind not typically heard in his study hall. The talk revealed a glimpse of his hidden character,

where listeners recognized that the seal of absolute truth was deeply embedded in his soul. A burning fire that consumes and eradicates any trace of falsehood and deception, an unyielding commitment to truth, no matter what.

The talk began with an interpretation of the verse: "And Sarah denied, saying, 'I did not laugh'" (Bereshit 18:15), quoting Onkelos's translation "And Sarah lied." He also cited the words from "Sefer Chassidim" (paragraph 217 Chapter 267): "Because Sarah deceived regarding Isaac, she died at the time of the binding of Isaac.

He intrigued the listeners' hearts with profound words: "If such a righteous woman as our matriarch Sarah was punished for merely 'lying' once, what will those do who lie all day long? They lie to the Creator, they lie at home,² they lie at work, they



2. One of the kollel wives once complained to my father (Rabbi Yoram) in

a letter that her home was empty of any foodstuffs, her husband didn't bring home

Parshat Bereshit - The Seal of Truth

lie to their neighbors and friends, they even lie to themselves...

While I am somewhat hesitant to put into writing these

sharp words, however, in my humble opinion, this talk caused many people to open their eyes and understand the real

Wellsprings of Wisdom

a respectable wage. He evaded helping her at home, and instead ran off to study Torah in the kollel at every available opportunity, ignoring her material and emotional needs. She ended off the letter by begging that her husband not find out about the letter, it would make him none too happy.

My father was pained to hear that this kollel man had no motivation to go work, and out of complacency was shrugging off his familial responsibilities.

This was in contrary to the obligation a husband accepts under the chuppah “And I will sustain, support, respect and clothe you as do Jewish men who faithfully support their wives”.

It was also clear to my father that this shirking of duties was causing friction and discord at home, and decided to take action that would cause him to snap out of his indifference.

My father called over this kollel student in the study hall in middle of his learning and asked him to do him a favor, to which he happily agreed.

My father proceeded to give him an envelope full with cash and told him: “There’s a woman whose husband is righteous and studies Torah all day and

doesn’t concern himself with her needs. He doesn’t know however, that in Heaven they’re unhappy with him, and every tear that his wife sheds can cause him harm.

Do me a favor, give her this envelope and tell her that Rabbi Yoram is praying for her, that her husband return to behave more considerately.

This kollel student didn’t imagine for one moment that he was somehow connected to this story, and while glad to help the Rabbi, felt much pity for this woman. The Rabbi quickly wrote the address on the envelope and gave it to the student who promptly put it in his jacket pocket.

Imagine his surprise when a short while later he removed the envelope and saw his very own home address written on it !

He needed no more scolding or reprimanding, for in one moment, without words, he understood what he had to do. From that day onward he improved and straightened out his behavior. His marital harmony improved drastically, and his Torah learning too was not harmed.

When one behaves properly and studies Torah, much spiritual and material abundance is bestowed upon him.

meaning of truth. To truly cleave to Hashem, blessed be He, and His Torah, one must walk the path of truth: truth with Hashem, truth in Torah, truth with one's spouse, truth with children, truth in livelihood, truth in speech, truth in thought !

Many times, we saw that when people who were considered "important" or held high positions, came to him, and they witnessed or heard words from him of pure truth without any compromise or whitewashing, they were left astonished.

I remember that a few years ago, a directive came from father's holy mouth to all his students and listeners regarding a matter related to the general public. He believed that it was Hashem's will. This directive did not sit well with some influential individuals in positions of authority who listened to his teachings and knew the great power of his words. They assumed he held a high Rabbinic position and received a salary from the state.

Without bothering to verify the facts, they sent him a letter threatening to fire him instantly if he did not "reconsider his views."

I recall that when Father saw this, he was so delighted and could not stop smiling all day. He said, "This is the advantage I have over them; I don't need to flatter to anyone. I can speak the truth as it is, without any compromise or concession, and I don't have to reckon with anyone, only to have Hashem in mind ! Only Him do I serve; I don't receive a salary from anyone else ! There's no reason to keep an eye on 'the trend,' to see where it's going. It's a waste of time..."

He never followed the prevailing trends, but only sought to fulfill the Creator's will in any given situation. The only thing that interested him was: What is Hashem's will ? That's it ! That was the starting point, the middle, and the end. Not even a hair's breadth could be introduced between them.

When someone made remarks such as “listen, honorable Rabbi, it’s not really lying; it’s simply a matter of leaving out some details. Perhaps, after all, we need to understand that this involves a

large sum of money, and we need it. After all, according to Halacha, Torah scholars are exempt from etc.”, usually, one look from father was enough to make them “take back their words,”.

For Rabbi Yoram there were no excuses

In one of the years, our father organized distribution of goods before Passover, in order to assist thousands of poor families, widows, and orphans. The value of the items stored in the warehouses amounted to hundreds of thousands of shekels.

However, on one of the nights before to the distribution, shameless thieves broke into the warehouse and emptied it entirely of its content. It seemed that all the families who relied on this support would be left without the barest necessities.

That's what it seemed like to everyone. Everyone that is, except for Rabbi Yoram.

Instead of wasting time on excuses and offering unnecessary explanations, as others might have done, father took action immediately. His unwavering commitment did not allow him to rest for even one moment. He did the exact opposite of what one might have expected. Without allowing himself to become confused or lose focus, he acted with full vigor, the huge expenses were not a deterrent.³

... Wellsprings of Wisdom ...

3. In one of my father’s talks about the trait of kindness he shared the following story: One day a Jew came to me to ask for assistance to save his daughter’s life. She needed a kidney donation which cost a terrific sum of money that he didn’t have.

I was very touched by his heartrending story and did my best to give him the support I was able to at the time. In addition, I put up a sign on his behalf in the kollel for all the students and visitors to see, requesting financial assistance.

Father requested to replenish all the food supplies as quickly as possible to ensure that the delivery would reach the homes

of the thousands of families on time, without causing any distress to those counting on this support.

The Light that Brings them Back

My father displayed an exemplary and unique form of leadership, undoubtedly rooted in the inner world in which he

lived. It was a world in which his words and heart were aligned, where he was constantly connected to the Divine.

... Wellsprings of Wisdom ...

A few days later a kollel student came over to me with a check written out to an enormous sum covering a large part of the costs of the kidney transplant. I was extremely surprised since he was a regular kollel student, not wealthy at all, where did he have such a large sum to contribute?

He explained, “for many years now I’ve been saving and pinching pennies every month toward buying an apartment of our own, and thank G-d we’ve managed to set aside a respectable amount as of yet.

When I heard of the poor man whose daughter needed a kidney transplant, I decided to withdraw all my savings and hand them over for this lofty cause. If G-d forbid this were one of my children or family members whose life was in danger, would I not be ready to lay out all of my savings to

rescue them? I can continue living in a rented property but this girl needs a new kidney urgently in order to live.

This selfless act of the kollel student completely blew me away, I felt great admiration to this young man who lived an extremely modest lifestyle yet was ready to give away everything he had so carefully saved, to rescue a little girl he had never even met.

I continued to observe this kollel student in the ensuing years and saw that he was very successful in educating his children in the proper path. He married them off into respected and honorable families and were no doubt financially secure.

It was clear to me that this sincere donation given with self-sacrifice and from the depths of the heart, stood in his families’ good stead and blessed them in all their endeavors.

Many times, people who seemed distant from Torah and mitzvot would come to his study hall. Their clothing was unusual, their hair was unkempt, and their bodies bore tattoos or other markings. Their appearance often raised eyebrows, but father saw them differently.

He had the ability to see these individuals with warmth and love, as if they were his close friends from childhood. He would greet them with warm words, embracing them with a soft and loving smile. Afterward, he would listen attentively to their words, even if they were discussing difficult and challenging matters. He rarely commented on their appearance, their tattoos, or their clothing. His ability to see people in this way continued for years, and he never changed his approach, showing unwavering warmth and care.

You would see such a person coming to the Beit Midrash every week for months, or even years, dressed the

same way, with long hair, seemingly unaffected by the spiritual environment. But over time, you could see something starting to shift – not necessarily externally, but internally in their consciousness. As the Torah penetrated deeper into their soul, a profound change would occur within them. In a genuine, stable transformation they would eventually change their entire way of life for the better.

Gradually, they started feeling uncomfortable with their clothing and other actions. Their inner change eventually manifested in an external transformation, and they embraced new behaviors and attitudes that aligned with their newfound spiritual awakening.

How did this happen? Father lived the teachings of our holy sages: "If they engage in Torah, the light within it brings them back" (Eicha Rabbah, Petichta, Par. 2). This would be brought about by means of the lessons they would hear in the

study hall, or the advice they would receive, or by the embrace of love and care. He knew that actions taken hastily, without careful thought, in the heat of the moment, would not last long. The change in a person's external behavior and appearance had to be grounded in something substantial.

As a result, the transformation was genuine and lasting, and became the embodiment of the verse: "And He said... 'Remove the filthy garments from him... See, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with opulent garments' "(Zechariah 3:4). Change from the inside out in this way, is enduring and genuine.

In Closing

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my dear brethren who support the extensive activities of our holy institutions dedicated to the lofty goal of disseminating Torah.

Today, with the help of Heaven, we are privileged to "spread forth wellsprings of Torah," fulfilling the response of the Moshiach to the Baal Shem Tov's question "When will the Master come?"

Every week in more than fifty countries around the world, people receive our Torah publications translated in a variety of languages:

English, Spanish, French, and Russian.

The words of the great sages of Israel and luminaries of Chassidut reach hundreds of thousands of Jewish souls, in Israel and around the world. They are like cool waters for a weary soul, awakening those who are drowsy and illuminating their path like a fiery torch in the darkness. These words kindle in their hearts a fire of love for Hashem, His Torah, and for the people of Israel.

In the final days of our saintly father before he ascended to the heavenly academy, he said to me

Parshat Bereshit - In Closing

in his holy voice, “I promise you
that whoever stands to your side,
I will stand by his side !”

Blessed are they who partner
with us, and fortunate is their
lot !



The Pathway...

Instead of practical conclusions, we present here a few bright sparks from the life of our father Rabbi Yoram that everyone can take as a guiding light to illuminate their path:

A. The greatness of a righteous person lies not only in their own fervent devotion to the Creator but also in their ability to kindle this fire in their students. Not only during their lifetime but also after their passing, the influence of the Righteous is evident in their students.

B. Our father merited that the words of Torah that he uttered penetrated directly into the hearts of the listeners, as our sages say, that one in who is G-d-fearing, their words are accepted. One who met our father would be immediately drawn to his words spoken with love and inner truth and would feel calmness and inner peace.

C. The greatness of the Righteous lie in their sincerity and simplicity. These together with the attribute of truth, served as a guiding light for our father.

D. After a righteous person departs from our world, one is able to connect to them through their books and teachings. Those who study his books, 'Betzur Yarum' and 'Imrei Noam' regularly, can almost visualize father in their minds answering their pressing questions. Just as during his lifetime father's answers were as sharp and, on the mark, so too do his books provide students with answers to their questions and doubts.

E. As during his lifetime when many experienced miracles thanks to father's blessings, now too, in merit of his holy books, many people are assisted supernaturally.

MAY HIS MERIT CONTINUE TO ASSIST US !

Shabbat Shalom !

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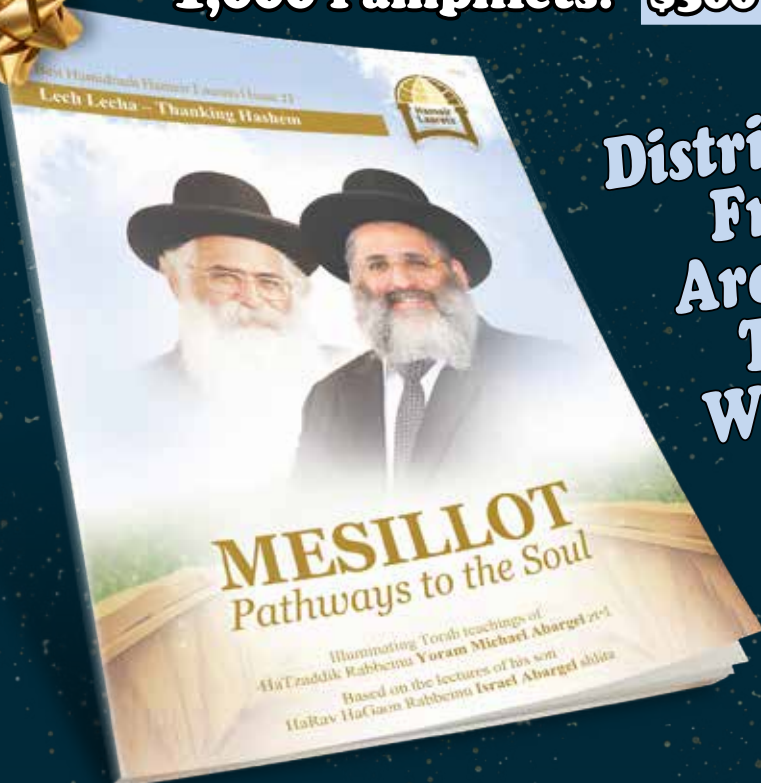
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Shabbat Times

Bereshit

29th of Tishrei, 5784



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	6:01pm	6:58pm	7:29pm
Miami	6:37pm	7:29pm	8:06pm
Los Angeles	6:04pm	6:58pm	7:33pm
Montreal	5:55pm	6:55pm	7:23pm
Toronto	6:20pm	7:19pm	7:48pm
London	5:54pm	7:00pm	7:22pm
Jerusalem	5:54 pm	6:43 pm	7:23 pm
Tel Aviv	5:51 pm	6:40 pm	7:18 pm
Haifa	5:50 pm	6:38 pm	7:17 pm
Be'er Sheva	5:51 pm	6:40 pm	7:19 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

The Talmud (tractate kiddushin 30a) states:
"One must divide their years of Torah
study in three: a third in Tanach, a third in
Mishnah, and a third in Talmud, as it says
"וְשִׁנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ" = And you should relate them
to your children, do not read 'שִׁנְתָּם' rather
'שִׁנְתָּם' = divided into three.

The Talmud asks: "Does one know how
many years they'll live? Rather one must
divide their days thus into three."

One must devote a third of their daily Torah
study to the study of Tanach, which draws
down a great spiritual light. All those who
diligently study the Tanach draw down
much spiritual energy, are successful in
their endeavors, and are quite fortunate.
It's highly recommended for one to educate
their children to constantly say the verses of
Tanach, and it's even worth bribing them to
do so if necessary.



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