

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 234

Noach | Kosher Wealth: A Bedrock of Judaism



MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

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

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Reviving Power of Imagination	1
Each Person's Unique Mission	4
A Wayward Generation of Plenty	6
Noah's Rebuke Upon Deaf Ears	9
Blameless Confession	12
Daylong Honesty	15
The Disastrous Effect of Ill-Gotten Gains	16
Utmost Care in Guarding Against Theft	19
Thievery in the Flesh	21
Do not forget to come home	23
The Commandment of Mezuzah	25
Summary and Practical Conclusions	27



DONATE

Beit Hamidrash Hameir La'aretz

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



500 Frank W Burr Blvd Suite 47
Teaneck, NJ 07666



en@h-l.org.il



www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en



HaKatzir 666, Netivot, Israel



(954) 800-6526



HameirLaaretsEN



HameirLaaretsEN



054-870-8737

Message Us to Join Our WhatsApp Groups

Parshat Noach

The Reviving Power of Imagination

In a remote Russian village, several generations ago, lived a Jew of simple mind who could not study Torah, although his heart overflowed with the love of G-d. This simple villager was privileged to be connected to the righteous Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch, the Rebbe Maharash, and from time to time, he would travel to visit him.

During each and every visit, he would beg and beseech the Rebbe for a blessing that he might merit to have children, for many years had passed since his marriage, and yet there were no offspring born to him and his wife.

On one such visit, when he again asked for a blessing for a child, the Rebbe responded and told him:

"Buy a Tanach with a Yiddish translation and study one chapter

thoroughly every day, and in that merit, you will yet have children."

The Jew left the Rebbe's presence, his face radiant with happiness, and he immediately purchased the said volume of Tanach and, from that day forward, never missed reciting his daily chapter with great intention.

The simple Jewish villager had been granted from Heaven a marvelous gift—the power of a vivid inner vision and imagination, and as he learned the Tanach with the Yiddish translation, every scene he read about stood alive and was conjured before him: the creation of the world, the lives of the Patriarchs, the bondage and enslavement of the Jewish people in Egypt, and their wondrous and miraculous redemption.¹ No one could have been more blissful and happier than he was with his

Parshat Noach - The Reviving Power of Imagination

newfound passion and discovery of the Torah's wealth of wisdom and rich tales of inspiration and meaning; this, together with the blessing and promise of the righteous that he and his wife would indeed be blessed with children of their own.

Within the year, a son was born to him, and the great joy

and rejoicing that enveloped his home spread to the entire village.

But tragically, when the child turned two, he went out to romp in the yard, where he suddenly fell dead.

His mother burst into heartrending sobs that pierced the small house and shook the whole village, and all the villagers,

Wellsprings of Wisdom

1. When telling stories about the righteous, one must know how to relate them to the listeners.

The story must sound truly alive—so that the listener forms a vivid image in their mind as if they are experiencing the event themselves.

The Rebbe Rayatz of Lubavitch, of saintly memory, related as follows (Sefer HaSichot, year 5704, page 7):

In my childhood, I loved to sit in the room of my grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel (who had already passed away by that time), and deeply contemplate the stories that I had heard from my teachers.

One day, as I sat in my grandfather's room, immersed in thought about a story from the Talmud I had heard from the chassid Reb Hendel—about Rabbi Judah the Prince, the compiler of the Mishnah, who would descend from Gan

Eden to visit his home every Friday night even after his passing (Ketubot 103b).

My great diligence in listening to stories and my love for repeating them at every opportunity developed in me the talent to visualize each story in such a tangible way, as if it were alive before my eyes.

When I imagined how Rabbi Judah the Prince would come to visit his home every Shabbat, the thought occurred to me that surely my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash, also comes to visit his room each day of Shabbat—or even during each and every day.

I recalled the teaching of our Sages (Chullin 7b): “The righteous are greater in their death than in life,” and I envisioned the life of the souls of the righteous and their conduct in Gan Eden, and with the imaginative power of childhood, I pictured how great the soul of my grandfather truly is.

Parshat Noach - The Reviving Power of Imagination

without exception, gathered round and stood in disbelief with slumped shoulders.

“Where is the father?” someone asked.

“He isn’t here—he’ll surely be back shortly,” came the reply.

Several hours later, the father arrived, and seeing the turmoil, he raised his voice and thundered: “What are you all doing here?! Leave—at once!”

The villagers shook their heads: Poor man—the tremendous grief must have driven him out of his mind.

The father thought to himself, Why all the commotion and disturbance? Haven’t they ever learned Tanach? Didn’t anyone remember what they could do to revive the boy?!

The father recalled that when he studied the book of Kings and came to the chapters about the life and miracles of the prophet Elisha, he saw in his mind’s eye how Elisha, through prayer and supplication, revived

the son of the Shunammite woman, and he still felt the tremor that ran through him—and the strong impression it left on him about how mighty is the power of prayer.

In pure and innocent faith in G-d and the biblical tales, he laid his son on the bed and did exactly as Elisha had done:

“Elisha came into the house, and there was the boy, dead, laid on his bed. He went in, shut the door upon the two of them, and prayed to G-d.

Then he went up and lay upon the child, mouth upon mouth, eyes upon eyes, hands upon hands—stretching himself over him, and the child’s flesh grew warm.

He returned, walked into the house once this way and once that, went up and stretched himself over him again; and the boy sneezed seven times, and opened his eyes” (II Kings 4:32-35).

When the father finished copying Elisha’s act, his son

Parshat Noach - Each Person's Unique Mission

stood up at once upon his feet,
alive and well.

Words cannot describe the uproar that followed—"A truly righteous man lives among us!" they exclaimed.

The father, in his simplicity, could not fathom the cause for their excitement: "What's the matter with you all? I simply acted upon explicit and commonly known verses in the Tanach."

When he saw that the clamor in his town would not die down, he had no choice but to set out to his Rebbe, Rabbi Shmuel.

Hearing the tale, the Rebbe entered an awe-filled state of deveikut-deep intentional connection to the divine, and when he

emerged from the trancelike state, he declared:

"What the prophet of yore achieved through his holiness, the simple Jewish man achieved through his simplicity and pure faith."²

This story penetrates and illustrates the unfathomable depths and indescribable power of true and sincere faith in G-d and his holy word, and in our ensuing discussion, let us vividly illustrate in our mind's eye and conjure up the life a man who had lived in the Generation of the Flood, an individual whom we shall call Yosef.

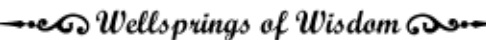
But first, a preface is in order.

Each Person's Unique Mission

In a lecture by Rabbi Yochanan David Salomon, he said:³

Our world—the material realm in which we live—is but a proving ground for

man. Every soul sent here "enclothes" itself in a body, receives a specific set of equipment, and embarks upon the obstacle course of life.



2. 'Haderech L'Hasimchah V'Haemet,' (p. 14b).

3. 'B'Ayin Yehudit' (Part 2, p. 72).

Parshat Noach - Each Person's Unique Mission

The equipment one receives includes the body; some bodies are strong and healthy, others are frail and ailing.

Included is also one's character of soul and its traits; inborn qualities, talents, and dispositions create the vast variety of human beings—no two are alike.

Finally, the property and everything else outside the person's body—their possessions and wealth—form the final part of the kit one is granted.

Each person's spiritual test differs from his fellow's both because each individual is different and also because the 'equipment' each person is given is vastly different.

Every trait, ability, and possession one owns participates in the trial: it can help him overcome obstacles or serve as an obstacle in itself.

Imagine two soldiers who are sent on a desert navigation challenge. One, an infantryman, receives two canteens and a map and must reach a certain point by

nightfall. The other is a helicopter pilot tasked to fly to a destination hundreds of kilometers away. Though the missions seem alike, they are not: the pilot must travel farther, reach his goal faster, and is given far more sophisticated tools.

Likewise, utterly different demands are placed on the rich and the poor, the gifted and the less gifted, the healthy and the weak.

Life is a complex chain of tests. And just as a pilot who abandons his chopper and starts trekking on foot forfeits his mission, a wealthy man who lets his money lie idle, a talented person who wastes his gifts—all alike fail, for they do not use the G-d given tools they have been given to most faithfully execute their mission.

In much the same manner, an infantryman who hitches a ride and reaches the target early fails because he has arbitrarily altered the test conditions. Although he reached the target and did so in the most efficient

manner, he did not follow the rules and procedures defined in the challenge he was given.

Likewise, in life, similar conduct, intransigence, and outsmarting and taking the role or the possessions of others in the face of the individual divine instruction that each person has is a severe abdication and shirking of one's duties, for it thwarts the Creator's plan for both oneself and the one from whose role and task he assumed; he has sabotaged the very course of the divine test, similar to one who shifts the chess pieces when the opponent turns away.

Our Sages, the authors of our prayers, have us proclaim daily:

“Happy are we—how good is our portion, how pleasant our lot, how beautiful our inheritance.”

“Inheritance” refers to the holy Torah, and although all of the Jewish people learn the same Torah and fulfill the same commandments, each man and woman has a personal and unique path in serving G-d, tailored to his or her traits and to the era in which their soul descends to this world.

Upon every individual, in his unique way, a divine light shines from above and is a tailor-made mission and 'inheritance' that is specifically entrusted to him.

Having understood this point, we now turn to the discussion of the Generation of the Flood.

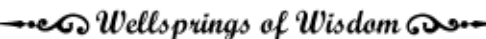
A Wayward Generation of Plenty

Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Arizal, writes the following:⁴

Before the sin of the Generation of the Flood, the spiritual vitality of mankind issued from the lofty level called Arich Anpin, wherein

lies the mystery of longevity; therefore people then lived extremely long lives.

But after committing many sins and the consequent Great Flood, the spiritual vitality to



4. 'Likkutei Torah' (Bereshit).

Parshat Noach - A Wayward Generation of Plenty

man came only from the level of Ze'eir Anpin, which in many sources is called "Short of Days."

This is the meaning of G-d's words, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever" (Genesis 6:3): were that spirit of Arich Anpin to remain, man would live indefinitely, but rather, "inasmuch as he is but flesh" and pursues coarse physical lusts, "his days shall be a hundred and twenty years"—no more.

As we said above, every individual possesses a unique path in the service of G-d, tailored both to his personal traits and to the era into which his soul descends.

Just as every person has a distinct mission, each generation also has its own collective task.⁵

The people of the Flood had a divine mission that was granted to them alone; we may discern its exalted nature from the extraordinary "tools" they received—vitality and lengthy years far more than those allotted to any subsequent generation.

This unmatched endowment of the Generation of the Flood is described in Job (chapter 21):

Those years were immeasurably blessed; every channel of bounty in the heavens stood wide open, pouring ceaselessly upon them.

Their prosperity flowed from the loftiest realms—"the skies of pre-eternity"—the uppermost world of Atzilut, from the level of Arich Anpin.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

5. In a certain sense, each and every generation is considered a unified formation and constitutes a complete whole—just as we often find in the words of the Sages the use of the term: "The generation of Hezekiah," "The generation of Yehuda ben Bava."

Every generation has a shared character unique to it, and therefore,

there is value and importance to individuals within a given generation unifying together. Despite the varied groups and ideological circles that differ greatly from one another, they must complement each other so that the honor of G-d may be revealed through all of the unique manifestations of that generation.

Their world was flawless: in it, there did not exist any pain, no disease, no bereavement, and no death.

When a person's time came, he merely sneezed and expired peacefully, without suffering at all.

They were blessed with endless bounty; they sowed their fields only once every forty years, yet the earth yielded produce for four decades without loss; their herds never miscarried; their food never spoiled.

They were phenomenally healthy and powerful, able to stride from one end of the world to the other in just a few short hours, uprooting cedars of Lebanon as they walked; lions and leopards were no more a threat to them than gnats upon the flesh.

All year round, the climate was as pleasant as the spring period between Passover and Shavuot.

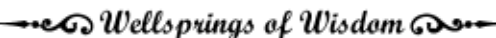
They knew no wars, no harmful creatures preyed upon them, and they sent even the smallest children unafraid out into the fields.

Colossal in body and mind and wealth, they were showered with unbounded, uncontracted goodness.

As such, G-d awaited their employment of these gifts properly in His service, but sadly, they did not.

The Generation of the Flood instead surrendered itself to hedonism, using every tool to indulge and give in to the physical body's cravings.

Job could find no epithet adequate enough to describe them until he struck upon one, calling them the "rebels against the Light." "They were among those who rebelled against the Light; they acknowledged not His ways, nor did they abide by His paths" (Job 24:13).⁶



6. To quote Rashi (on the verse): "These wicked ones are the

Generation of the Flood who rebelled against G-d openly."

Parshat Noach - Noah's Rebuke Upon Deaf Ears

No alternative remained:
a decree of annihilation
against them hovered in the
air.⁷

Nonetheless, the Divine
Mercy pleaded for them to
receive one more chance—and,
in fact, obtained it.

Noah's Rebuke Upon Deaf Ears

G-d appeared to Noah:
“Noah, the end of all flesh has
come before Me—but I wish to
grant them another opportunity.
Go and impress upon them the
gravity of their deeds.”

Noah obeyed G-d's directive
and went to work on a
decades-long project.

In the bustling market stalls of
the city of Chanoch,⁸ mountains of
luscious fruit and gigantic
vegetables were laid out, and the
fairy-tale air of the bazaar pulsed
as always with charm and mystery.
Towering men with bare arms
wandered about, hoisting elephant

carcasses from place to place as
though moving sheets of paper.

Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Standing atop a great stone, the
righteous Noah proclaimed: “Hear
you all, the words that G-d has sent
through me: repent before G-d
from your evil ways—otherwise
He will bring a Flood.”

Tomatoes, cucumbers, and
yellow peppers began to rain
down upon Noah from all sides,
spattering Noah's face and
clothes in every color of the
rainbow. But he did not break; he
pressed on, striving to save the
world and spare its destruction.⁹

 Wellsprings of Wisdom

7. “And G-d said to Noah: The end of all
flesh has come before Me, for the earth
is filled with violence because of them,
and behold, I am about to destroy them
together with the earth” (Genesis 6:13).

8. As this city is referred to in the
verse: “And Cain knew his wife,

and she conceived and bore
Chanoch; and he built a city and
named the city after his son,
Chanoch” (Genesis 4:17).

9. “And Noah was five hundred years
old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and
Japheth” (Genesis 5:32).

Parshat Noach - Noah's Rebuke Upon Deaf Ears

Job alludes to this: “A torch of contempt is reserved for one who is at ease; it is ready for the feet of those who slip” (Job 12:5).

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 108b) expounds:

Rabbah taught: What is meant by “A torch of contempt”? It teaches that Noah reproved them with words of rebuke as sharp as torches, and yet they scoffed at him.

They asked, “Old man, why do you busy yourself with this ark?”

He answered, “The Holy One, blessed be He, is bringing a Flood upon you all for your wicked ways.”

They retorted, “A Flood of what? Fire?—we have another material called ‘Alita’ which is fireproof; Water?—if it rises from the earth, we have iron flasks with which we will plate the ground; and if it rains down from the heavens, we have a certain material called ‘akev’ or ‘akesh’ that can dry it up.”

Noah thereupon replied, “The flood will surely come from beneath your very heels, as it is written ‘ready for the feet of those who slip.’”

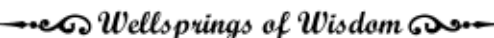
The Midrash (Bereshith Rabbah 30:7) adds:

“Torch”—refers to an announcement: Noah announced and rebuked his generation, saying, “Repent, otherwise G-d will bring a Flood.”

“Contempt”—the entire generation despised, cursed, and ridiculed him; “The Flood will come to you, not to us,” they laughed.

Indeed, five years before the Flood, Noah’s father Lamech died, and five years later, in the time prior to the flood, his grandfather Methuselah passed.

Noah became a joke: “He says a Flood is coming upon us, meanwhile it strikes his own family.”



The Sforno explains (ibid. 6:10): “‘Noah begot’ – From the time he began to

rebuke and admonish his generation, he merited to have children.”

Parshat Noach - Noah's Rebuke Upon Deaf Ears

Indeed, who can stand up against scoffers?¹⁰

But among all of the people in the market stood a man named

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

10. To bring an excerpt from the words of Rabbi Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ('Meitav Hegayon' – Chapter Six):

In the beginning, man sat in the Garden of Eden and delighted in the radiance of the Divine Presence. But after he sinned and was expelled, a new era began – the era of chaos.

As the Talmud states (Sanhedrin 97a):

"It was taught in the school of Elijah: the world will exist for six thousand years: two thousand years of chaos, two thousand years of Torah, and two thousand years of the Messianic era."

From the moment man was banished from Eden, and the path back to the Garden was concealed from him, the Holy One, Blessed be He, concealed His face—if only for a brief instant—and left man to himself in a world overflowing with goodness and blessing, treasures beyond comprehension, and pleasures without number.

No longer would G-d speak to man or command him, instruct or guide him—it was as if G-d had abandoned the earth, as if the divine eye above no longer sees, and His ear no longer hears. Everything seemed to be permitted to man, everything forgiven. Even the seven

commandments given to him were no longer actively demanded of him.

Gradually, knowledge of G-d dimmed in the world, and with it all virtue.

People began imitating one another's evil deeds, and the desire—the root of all sin—began to reign in the world.

Every corrupted lust and vile craving found a home within human society, which knew how to glorify and exalt them.

Yet G-d remained silent.

People became like beasts of the field, chasing after their desires all day long—and G-d remained silent.

Men turned into wild animals—preying, robbing, plundering, trampling—and G-d remained silent.

The inhabitants of the earth became addicted to evil, to destruction, to every abomination—and G-d remained silent.

Did G-d abandon the earth? Of course not.

But He hid His face from it to see what would come of it, what would befall the world without the guiding principles of the Torah.

Until when? Until all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth, and the earth was filled with malevolence.

Yossi, and Noah's emotional
plea and stern words

stirred him to thoughts of
repentance.

Blameless Confession

One of the bystanders, whom we shall name Yossi, was unlike the rest and listened intently to Noah's words. "The truth is that he's right," he thought sadly. "Our generation has lost its humanity. We all fail to see the heart that beats within every person—a heart that needs feeling and love."

"In my opinion," Yossi mused on, "the main problem of our generation is that everyone—all people—are focused solely and entirely upon themselves."¹¹

In fuller detail:

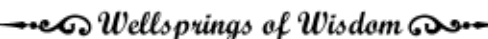
Every thought of man is derived from some vested interest; whatever does not interest a person, he will not think about. When one loves himself excessively, and his own existence fills up his entire 'world,' there remains no space

at all, even for the very thought of another's existence.

Such was the reality of the people of the Flood: they were so steeped in self-love, so wholly absorbed in satisfying their own desires, that they didn't leave even the slightest trace in their minds for the existence of anyone else.

That excessive self-love produced all of their dreadful sins—stealing and robbery, cruelty and murder—all committed without a trace of remorse, in total numbness to the anguish of their "victims."

This state of selfishness clarifies to us how they could have been so utterly unaware of the victim's pain - the victim's very existence never even crossed their mind.



11. See at length in 'Michtav Me'Eliyahu' (Vol. 2, p. 155).

Parshat Noach - Blameless Confession

Yossi's thoughts kept churning:

"I don't think I'm like that. I don't steal; I'm no highwayman and no bank robber. As for me, I'm a good person!"

Let us now move forward a few millennia in time to Yehoshua, who recites the afternoon service in the vicinity of the Kotel, the Western Wall, in modern-day Israel.¹²

Yehoshua stands in prayer, beating his chest in confession: "We have trespassed, we have betrayed, we have stolen."

The thought flashes through his mind. Did I, in fact, steal? When and where did I do so?

He stops in mid-prayer, puzzled by the fact that the words upon his lips are a confession of a crime he never committed.

The congregation has already "moved on" in the prayer, and there is no time for lengthy reflection, so he settles for a simple explanation:

"The prayers are, after all, phrased in the plural—"we have betrayed, we have stolen." Since we are praying as a community, and in a community, there often are such offenders, we therefore confess on their behalf, for all of the Jewish people are all responsible for one another.

A pleasant and spiritual calm suddenly envelops him; he confesses the sinners' crimes, and he is, in essence, their protector. In his own eyes, he resembles a High Priest on Yom Kippur, a righteous servant of G-d who bears the people's sins on his shoulders and intercedes for the transgressors.¹³

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

12. The following is excerpted from 'B' Ayin Yehudit' (Part 2, p. 70).

13. In this connection we share the following story:

On the night of the 21st of Adar, 5728

(1968), the grandson of Chacham Menachem Menashe, who slept in his grandfather's house, awoke to see his grandfather immersed in intense prayer, lighting candles in memory of the righteous.

Parshat Noach - Blameless Confession

The grandson, who was already a young man by then, asked his grandfather what the matter was about, to which Chacham Menachem replied that it would be wise for him too to rise and pray for his cousin Menachem, who was currently in danger, and he even instructed him what prayers to recite.

After a long hour of fervent prayer, from the depths of the heart, Chacham Menachem informed his grandson that, thank G-d, the decree had been annulled, and Menachem was saved.

He could now go back to sleep.

The grandson, worried for his cousin's fate, asked what had happened.

Chacham Menachem told him to wait—Menachem himself would come tomorrow and tell all that had transpired.

The next day, Menachem indeed arrived to thank his grandfather for saving his life.

He shared that he was serving in the paratrooper brigade and had received an order to cross the Jordan River and carry out a military operation against terrorists entrenched in the town of Karamah, Jordan, which had become a hornet's nest of terrorists.

Since it was nighttime and the waters of the Jordan River were turbulent, it was impossible to cross by foot or swim.

Ropes were strung from one bank to the other, and the soldiers crossed by holding onto the rope as they moved forward.

While Menachem was crossing, the heavy load on his back—a large crate of explosives and ammunition—caused his hands to slip from the rope, and he plunged into the river and began to drown.

The current was strong, and he was swiftly carried away. Then, suddenly, a life preserver appeared under his feet, halting his downward descent, and lifted him to the surface.

Then, another current pushed him to the riverbank, and he was thrown out at the edge of the Jordan.

In his dazed state, he saw his grandfather, Chacham Menachem Menashe, appear and strike his back several times until he vomited all of the water he had swallowed and returned to consciousness and regained his strength, and soon, he rejoined his unit—alive, healthy, and joyfully.

Although the power to think about and influence one's offspring in such a manner may seem like a most exalted spiritual level, we find that Rabbi Shalom Dovber, the Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch, of blessed memory, said the following (Hayom Yom, 22 Tevet):

"Just as the laying of tefillin every day is a biblical obligation upon every Jew, regardless of whether he is a great Torah scholar or a simple person—so too is it an absolute duty for every Jew to dedicate half an hour each day to thinking about the education of his children, and to do all that is within his power, and beyond his power, to ensure that his children follow the path in which they are being guided."

Parshat Noach - Daylong Honesty

We now pause and ask: is Yossi in Noah's generation and Yehoshua in the modern era justified in their argument?

Are they guiltless and free from any blame and responsibility?

Before answering this matter, let us first discuss another related subject.

Daylong Honesty

Rabbi Yochanan David Solomon highlights how everyday actions, seemingly harmless, often cross the line into theft (B' Ayin Yehudit, vol. 2, p. 70):

A secretary, thrilled for a break, uses her office phone for a long-distance call—without her boss's permission.

A man, sweating in a crowded bus station, rests his pricey briefcase on another person's luggage without asking.

Danny, expelled once again, rides an unlocked bike in the schoolyard, returning it before anyone might notice.

Likewise, someone who finds a pen in his pocket—likely

borrowed and forgotten—and uses it freely at home.

Each case feels trivial, yet the halachah is clear: using someone else's property without consent is theft, even if no 'damage' has occurred. Good intentions, convenience, or assumptions about forgiveness don't change the basic wrong.

The examples are plentiful and everywhere:

A patient who fakes a receipt to get reimbursed for someone else's medical care.

Car repairs which are exaggerated to milk insurance claims from companies.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

Consequently, it stands to reason that when one fulfills these words, the gates of the heart are opened to perceive all

that befalls one's offspring in the worlds above and in our material world as well ('Mofet L' Shabbat,' Bamidbar, p. 206).

Parshat Noach - The Disastrous Effect of Ill-Gotten Gains

Employers who issue false salary invoices so employees can claim extra benefits.

Families who rearrange furniture to feign overcrowding before government inspectors to gain undeserved benefits.

Even educators, who serve as guardians of society's values, may unknowingly pocket school supplies "for a good cause" without a second thought. Society often justifies these acts: it's "just" a company, "just" an institution, and anyway, they'll "donate" to charity afterward.

This culture trains the next generation that small thefts are normal. Soldiers eventually come to "replace" stolen equipment with other stolen gear; schoolchildren

swipe bike parts to "even the score."

But Judaism stands firmly against this mindset. Pirkei Avot teaches: "One who says, 'What's mine is yours and what's yours is mine'—is an ignoramus."

Ownership matters, even for trivial items.

Our great rabbis painstakingly returned even the smallest coin that wasn't theirs.

This is because underlying this scrupulousness is a deeper belief: property rights are sacred. Even the faintest dust of theft corrupts a person.

Judaism teaches respect for what is truly ours—and, just as importantly, for what is not.

The Disastrous Effect of Ill-Gotten Gains

The great and heavenly stature of the holy Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Rimanov defies the description of the written word.

Let it suffice that we recall the awe-inspiring description voiced by his disciple, Rabbi Naftali Zvi of Ropshitz:

Parshat Noach - The Disastrous Effect of Ill-Gotten Gains

“He is, as it were, one of the sacred names of the Divine—only garbed in a physical body with a *shtreimel* and *kapoteh*.”¹⁴

Such was the deep reverence that the righteous of his generation felt toward his lofty persona.

Once, at the doorway of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Rimanov's study hall, stood a Jew weeping uncontrollably.

Those inside hurried toward him in alarm: “Reb Yid, what has happened? Don’t worry—we are here to help you!”

The man continued to weep; the flood of tears would not abate.

“Please have pity on me,” he wailed. “I must speak with Rabbi Menachem Mendel, myself.”

The shaken listeners quickly led him to the chamber of the Rebbe of Rimanov.

Inside, the Jew began his tale:

“G-d granted me great wealth and a wonderful wife, yet for

more than ten years, we have had no children.

Then, at last, a beautiful and adorable son was born to us.

From his earliest childhood, we discerned his extraordinary gifts and lightning-quick grasp.

At two, he knew the entire alef-bet; at five, he began learning Gemara. He loved to study Torah, devouring page after page, tractate after tractate.

The rabbi in our town would always praise us: ‘Happy is your lot to have such a son. I am certain he will stay on this path throughout all of his life—have our Sages not declared (Avot 4:2), “One mitzvah leads to yet another”?’

One page of Gemara will lead and draw yet another, and he will grow into a great scholar.’

Yet when our boy reached the age of twelve—just before his bar-mitzvah—to our great

shock and dismay, he solemnly announced: 'I have decided to leave everything behind and to convert to Christianity.'

Since hearing that, our life has lost all taste or meaning."

Rabbi Menachem Mendel sighed and replied:

"Know that you are not the first father to tell me this. Indeed, it has puzzled me greatly in the past: some children remain constantly in the study-house, pray with great devotion, answer 'Amen, yehei shemeh rabbah,' and conduct themselves properly—yet when they grow up they change completely, abandon Torah and prayer, and behave improperly.

This comes as a great surprise, for the Torah they have learned in their childhood is 'breath without sin'; it should have stood them in good stead and fortified their souls, as our sages declare that 'One mitzvah draws another.'

But after much inquiry, the cause has been revealed to me from Heaven:

These children were born with pure, refined bodies that naturally gravitated to Torah and spirituality.

But their fathers stumbled in the sin of theft, and with the stolen money, they bought home food for their children.

Consequently, from that food, their flesh and blood were formed, and because their very bodies were developed and strengthened out of stolen goods, they became sullied and tainted, and that cast them away from the realm of holiness.

"Understand," the Rebbe continued, "that G-d disclosed this secret and hinted at this in the Torah: the innards of the sacrifice of a bird is cast away from the altar and not offered upon G-d's altar because it eats and benefits from theft—and therefore must be thrown outside of the realm of holiness."

Let us expand upon this example a bit further.

Utmost Care in Guarding Against Theft

My father, Rabbi Yoram Abargel said the following in a talk ('Imrei No'am,' Vayikra, ma'amar 7):

The offerings in the Temple came from two kinds of creatures—beasts and birds.

Concerning the burnt-offering of birds, the Torah commands: “He shall remove its innards with its feathers and throw it beside the altar, eastward, to the place of the ashes” (Leviticus 1:16).

In contrast, the entrails of a burnt-offering from cattle are washed and then offered upon the altar; why the difference?

The Midrash explains: a domesticated animal eats only from its owner's manger, not from stolen food; therefore, its innards may ascend upon the altar, but a bird feeds by foraging in other people's fields—living, as it were, on theft—so its entrails must be discarded.

Even though a bird consumes but a small amount, and its theft

is, therefore, minute in quantity, its inner parts are nonetheless loathsome for the altar, because the sin of theft—even to the smallest degree—is utterly abhorrent to G-d, as it is written: “For I, G-d, love justice, I hate robbery in a burnt-offering” (Isaiah 61:8).

Our Sages say in a similar vein (Sanhedrin 108a) that the Generation of the Flood wallowed in immorality and many other sins, yet G-d delayed their final doom—until they stretched out their hands to theft; it was only then that their verdict was sealed at once.

This teaches how very cautious a person must be to avoid theft, lest he be rejected from G-d's presence.

One may think: “What have I to do with the sin of theft? Am I a thief? The verse “You shall not steal” (Leviticus 19:11) speaks to others, not to me!”

However, that is a grave mistake: many times, a person

may come to steal without even knowing it, as in the following examples:

An employee who has been hired to work set daily hours, say eight to four, must feel that during that time, they are virtually their employer's servant; they may not busy themselves with matters unrelated to the job, lest it be considered stealing.

The Gemara (Ta'anit 23a) tells a tale about Abba Chilkiah, a grandson of Choni Ha-Me'agel.

When the world needed rain, the Sages would ask him to pray, for his prayers would be effective and would get answered.

Once, two scholars came to his field while he was laboring for his livelihood. Yet when they greeted him, he did not even turn his head to answer them until his workday had ended—lest he stand idle for even a moment and rob his employer of the task he had paid him to do.

Likewise, a person may wish to increase his income by

taking on an additional job that starts at three o'clock, an hour before his current job ends, at four in the afternoon. Here, a real trial and test begins: is he going to be honest and faithful, or will the urge to earn a dishonest dollar prevail?

An upright person understands that he cannot accept the second job, tempting as it is, for at an earlier hour, he is still obligated to his employer. But one who is seized by the urge to steal will find clever ways to “disappear” early and “earn” both salaries.

This matter is all the more crucial if one's labor is in the holy subjects— a rabbi in a yeshivah, a teacher in a Talmud Torah, and the like—where the responsibility is doubly great.

Such a person must be even more careful not to arrive late except under absolute duress, nor may he occupy his teaching hours with anything else. If he does, he is not only a thief, but of him, the Prophet says, "Cursed is he who performs the

Parshat Noach - Thievery in the Flesh

work of G-d deceitfully"
(Jeremiah 48:10).

Likewise, a married Kolel student supported to learn Torah full-time must devote the entire prescribed schedule exclusively to learning. He may not waste time or be absent except for unavoidable circumstances, for 'Torah is his sole vocation' and his "employer" is none other than G-d Himself.

A person must know: even a single ill-earned penny can banish blessings from his home and bring harsh troubles. Worse yet, when ill-gotten money buys food for one's children, it plants in their hearts harmful thoughts and doubts

in faith; they may come to abandon G-d's ways and cast off Heaven's yoke, bringing misfortune and sorrow upon their parents.

Therefore, one who fears Heaven—if he realizes that in a given month he received a salary that is beyond what is honestly deserved, for whatever reason—should deduct the unjust sum from his account and return it to its owner.

In the merit of such self-sacrifice to avoid the sin of theft, G-d will surely annul all harsh decrees against the person and shower him with salvation, blessing, and success in all of his affairs.

Thievery in the Flesh

To understand why the Torah treats the prohibition of robbery so gravely, we must first offer a brief introduction:

Every Jew possesses a Divine soul that both animates and continually brings him into being.

Although this soul—called the "Divine spark"—is a single, simple essence, it is nevertheless revealed in several distinct strata that do not emerge on their own; in order to merit their revelation, a Jew must refine his soul; the purer

Parshat Noach - Thievery in the Flesh

the person, the deeper the levels that consequently surface.

To bring out this point, let us cite the Midrash (Genesis Rabbah, 14:9) that says: “Five names are given to the soul: nefesh, ruach, neshamah, chayah, and yechidah.”

Kabbalah and Chasidut explain how these five names express the five tiers of the soul’s manifestation, which, broadly speaking, falls into two groups—inner faculties and outer, encompassing faculties:

The inner faculties—those that operate within the soul’s conscious domain—are nefesh, ruach, and neshamah.

The outer, encompassing faculties—those that hover above conscious awareness—are the lofty levels of chayah and yechidah.

Below, we summarize these five levels of the G-dly soul:

1. Nefesh - Of this tier, the Torah states, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11) and, "For the blood is the life force" (Deuteronomy 12:23). Nefesh is the vital, elemental Divine energy that sustains a person's entire natural existence—both biological and spiritual.

According to Etz Chayim (Gate 1, ch. 3), the level of nefesh manifests in the liver.

2. Ruach - The level that animates the soul’s emotional and behavioral powers and manifests in the heart (Etz Chayim, *ibid.*).

3. Neshamah - It is the level that enlivens the soul’s revealed, conscious intellect and manifests itself in the brain.

From the above, it is clear that these three gradations, nefesh, ruach, and neshamah, dwell within the human body itself—the brain, the heart, and the liver.¹⁵

Wellsprings of Wisdom

15. The Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, writes (‘Adir BaMarom,’ p. 369):

“Know that the true expression of life is specifically upon the union of the Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah; when

Parshat Noach - Do not forget to come home

4. Chayah - The encompassing light that is closest to the person's conscious faculties, yet its illumination lies in the supra-conscious realm. Its influence is expressed through the human faculty and expression of desire and will, which radiates outward over the entire stature of the soul.

5. Yechidah - It is the most distant and loftiest encompassing light—hidden and transcendent, and it manifests with the soul's faculty of delight.

These two encompassing levels, chayah and yechidah, are manifested by two external factors that surround them: clothing and a home. A person's chayah is expressed by his garments, while his yechidah is

encompassed by the house in which he dwells.

This allows us to better understand why robbery is so severe:

With the stolen money, a thief supports and nourishes all five strata that envelop him.

By purchasing food and drink with the ill-gotten funds, he sustains his brain, heart, and liver with evil; by buying clothing and paying for a house, one feeds and sustains the spiritual domains of chayah and yechidah with spiritual waste.

Thus, he becomes—to the very last fiber of his being—a being that is inextricably bound to theft; there can hardly be anything worse!

Do not forget to come home

We bring an excerpt from the writings of Rabbi

Eliezer Shlomo Shick, the Moharash:¹⁶

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

the Ruach grasps the Neshamah from above and the Nefesh from below and binds them together.

The true experience of life is specifically possible when the Neshamah succeeds

in manifesting within the lowest level, Nefesh, and this too, is only possible when the middle layer—Ruach—is pure and cleansed of all dross and impurity.”

16. ‘Otzar HaKuntresim’ (Vol. 19, p. 173).

Parshat Noach - Do not forget to come home

"Know that the essence of a Jew's holiness is revealed specifically when they live 'inside' the realm of holiness—that is, with palpable and revealed faith that nothing exists besides for Him and that all one's needs, spiritual and material, are to be sought only from Him.

This faith creates a 'home'—when a person accustoms himself to living in this way, he dwells peacefully and serenely within, but the very moment he forgets of this awareness and imagines that everything depends on his own power and cleverness, he is banished to the 'outside,' away from G-d's presence, and life then becomes bitter and harsh.

The tried-and-true remedy to awareness of G-d's presence is the mezuzah.

Each and every time that a person returns and enters their home, they should place their hands on the mezuzah and kiss it, drawing upon themselves its sanctity—which is the essence of the Torah—the unity of the Creator.

One must then thank the Holy One, blessed be He, for bringing him safely home, and beseech Him: 'Just as I have merited to return in peace to my home, so may I merit to return in repentance, with my soul, to You; and let Your light forever rest upon me.'

A person must strengthen himself in every possible way: just as he constantly leaves his home and then returns, placing his hand on the mezuzah and kissing it, so too spiritually—even if his evil inclination overpowers him and he falls to the depths—he must never despair. He should always return to the pure faith that is epitomized by the mezuzah and bind himself to it, for the light within it will surely restore him to the good.

By attaching himself to the holiness of the mezuzah, one will be saved from the lust for money, for the mezuzah reminds him of G-d's reality—that He fashions and guides His world as He wills and that both poverty and wealth are solely from Him.

Knowing this, he will not be in a rush or frenzy to amass

Parshat Noach - The Commandment of Mezuzah

riches; rather, he will trust in the One Who grants him the strength and the success to prosper.

Our Sages relate (Jerusalem Talmud, Pe'ah 1:1): Artaban (then king of Persia) sent to Rabbi Judah HaNasi a priceless jewel and asked for something of equal worth in return.

Rabbi Judah sent him a mezuzah.

Artaban protested, 'Is my jewel merely equivalent to this?'

Rabbi Judah replied, 'All of

your wealth and the wealth of your kingdom are not worth even one mezuzah. Moreover, you sent me a gem that I must guard day and night, whereas I sent you something that guards you at all times.'

The mitzvah of mezuzah nullifies man's craving for wealth—making an idol of gold and jewels—and instead, implants in him the proper awareness that everything is from the Al-mighty; precisely through this awareness one will, in due course, attain extraordinary prosperity."

The Commandment of Mezuzah

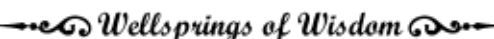
It is a positive Torah commandment to affix a mezuzah to the entrance of one's house, as we are commanded: "You shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:9).

A mezuzah consists of two Torah passages written on a single parchment: "Hear, Israel," as well as "And it shall be if you

will heed," both of which are then fixed upon the doorpost.

As long as a mezuzah is in one's home, he fulfills a mitzvah every moment.

As Rabbi Ovadia Yosef of blessed memory, rules:¹⁷ "As long as a person dwells in a house with a mezuzah, he is fulfilling the commandment every single hour."



17. 'Yabia Omer' (Vol. 8, Yoreh De'ah, Siman 27, section 4).

Parshat Noach - The Commandment of Mezuzah

The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 285:1) states:

“It is a positive commandment to write the required paragraphs 'Hear, Israel', etc., and to affix them to the doorpost.

One must be extremely careful with it; whoever is careful will be blessed with length of days for himself and for his children.”

The words of the Shulchan Aruch, in fact, echo the explicit promise of the verse: “So that your days and the days of your children may be lengthened upon the land G-d swore to your fathers to give them” (Deuteronomy 11:20-21).

Within this second paragraph of the Shema section, we read: “And you shall place these My words upon your heart and upon your soul; bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they

shall be frontlets between your eyes” (ibid., v. 18).

Rashi comments:

““And you shall place these My words’—even after you are exiled and dispersed among the nations, remain distinguished through the mitzvot—put on tefillin, inscribe mezuzot—so that they will not be new to you when you return.”

Thus, even when the Jewish people are dispersed to the four corners of the earth, they must be extremely scrupulous with the commandments of tefillin and mezuzah.

And, as abovementioned, care with regard to mezuzot is both the cure and the rectification for the lust for wealth, as well as unknowing dishonesty in business and ill-gotten gains.





The weekly lecture in the Beit Midrash



Praying for the Jewish people at the Western Wall



Torah class for the soldiers of the Netzach Yehuda Battalion



Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita, together with the Chief Rabbi of Or Yehuda, Rabbi Tzion Cohen

Illuminating the World



The weekly lecture in Ashdod



Condolence visit to the Sirota family



Blessing for those seeking a match on the eve of Tu B'Av

➤ Ongoing construction progress at Beit HaRav Yoram ➤



The air conditioning system installation



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:

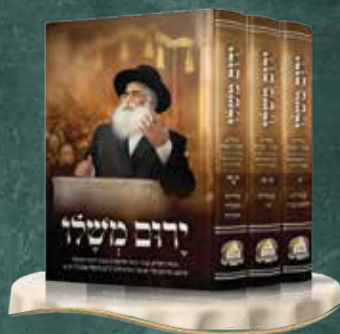


❧ Bashir Yarom ❧

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

❧ Yarom Mishlo ❧

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



❧ Shufra DiYosef ❧

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.



Batzur Yarom

The “Batzur Yarom” lessons of our teacher of
blessed memory,
Now published for the first time,
On the section Shaar 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



Distribution free of charge
publication Requires Genizah

703

Shabbat Times Noach

3rd of Cheshvan, 5786



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	5:44 pm	6:42 pm	7:13 pm
Miami	6:27 pm	7:19 pm	7:56 pm
Los Angeles	5:50 pm	6:45 pm	7:19 pm
Montreal	5:35 pm	6:36 pm	7:03 pm
Toronto	6:01 pm	7:01 pm	7:30 pm
London	5:30 pm	6:37 pm	6:58 pm
Jerusalem	5:42 pm	6:31 pm	7:08 pm
Tel Aviv	5:38 pm	6:28 pm	7:05 pm
Haifa	5:36 pm	6:29 pm	7:05 pm
Be'er Sheva	5:39 pm	6:31 pm	7:08 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

Do everything in your power to bring fear of Heaven into your home from the very earliest age; in the merit of the pure breath of Jewish children the Holy One, blessed be He, annuls from upon the Jewish people all evil decrees. This is hinted at in the verse "A soft tongue can break a bone" (Proverbs 25); "break a bone" - "תשבר גרם" is an acronym for: "the children who learn Torah annul evil decrees" "בית רבן גזירות רעות מבטלים" that is, the the Torah of young children, annuls every kind of harsh and evil decree.



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
+1 (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



Français

joindre :



Русский

присоединиться:



English

to join:



Español

Para unirse:



עברית

להצטרפות:

