

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 243

**Shemot** | Torah Scholars Hold the World's Keys



# 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 Holy Song of Songs.....	1
Unquenchable Love .....	4
The Love of the Jewish People .....	5
The Joy of Impurity .....	7
The Descent of the Jews .....	9
A New King Arose .....	11
The Footsteps of Redemption Are Near .....	11
Believers, Sons of Believers .....	13
The Keys of the World in His Hands ! .....	20
<i>Summary and Practical Conclusions</i> .....	24



**DONATE**

### Beit Hamidrash Hameir La'aretz

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



500 Frank W Burr Blvd Suite 47  
Teaneck, NJ 07666



en@h-l.org.il



[www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en](http://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 Shemot

## The Holy Song of Songs

Rabbi Shabtai Yudelevitch ZY"A once related the following story:<sup>1</sup>

One time, a certain ignorant member of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) disrespectfully described *Shir ha-Shirim* (Song of Songs), the Holy of Holies, as if it were merely a lewd love song. The Knesset was up in arms over the incident.

Around that time, I happened to be giving a lecture at some venue where I learned that many Knesset members would be present. I seized the opportunity to explain to them the absurdity of those remarks. And so I said:

*"Once, a Jew called me to help make peace between him and his wife, to restore harmony in their home. He told me that generally, they lived nicely together, but*

*one day, he came home irritable and told her that her nose looked as long as a tower, and from that day on, their relationship was shattered, and his wife would not forgive him.*

*I came and tried to speak with her. I told her that everyone sometimes blurts out a word or two, and she shouldn't be so offended by what he said."*

*"Oh, Rabbi,' she interrupted me, 'you don't understand me ! Let me tell you a story my father told me. In his town, there was a water-carrier who had an unusually long beard. One day, a prankster came and asked him: "Zalman, tell me, when you go to sleep, do you put your beard under the blanket or on top of it ?" The joker finished his words and left.*

### ∞ Wellsprings of Wisdom ∞

1. His words are cited in *Doresh Tov—Passover Haggadah*, p. 126.

*The next morning, the water-carrier came and grabbed the prankster and began to beat him. The police soon arrived, arrested the assailant, and summoned him to court.*

*When he appeared in court, the judge asked him: "What happened, Zalman? Why on earth did you hit him?"*

*'I'll tell you, Your Honor,' answered the water-carrier as he stood before the judge. 'After he said what he said about my beard, I went home and went to bed. At first, I left my beard on top of the blanket. Then I thought that wasn't nice, so I tucked it inside. It started to itch. I took it back out, then tucked it in again. On top of the blanket, under the blanket, on top, under... In short, I didn't sleep all night. I went completely crazy. I woke up cranky—so is it any wonder I gave him a beating?'*

*The judge listened intently and finally asked, "Zalman, tell*

*me for a moment—where did you usually put your beard?"*

*'Believe me,' Zalman scratched his head in embarrassment, 'I've had this beard for sixty years, and I don't know the answer... Once he spoke to me, I got completely confused...'"*

*"The woman fell silent for a moment, then continued: 'The exact same thing happened to me. When my husband said I have a nose as long as a tower, I began looking in the mirror. I saw that it really was a bit big, but I wasn't sure. It bothered me so much that I decided to go for plastic surgery to shorten my nose. I went to the doctor, and he measured my nose to see whether it was long or not. "What do you say?" I asked him anxiously. "It's a bit hard to determine," he replied, "it's borderline..."'*

*That's it—since then, my life has been miserable. Tell me, Rabbi, how can I forgive him?!"<sup>2</sup>*

---

 *Wellsprings of Wisdom* 

2. Sadly, in the end, that home didn't have much success; it disintegrated

into dust, and no marital harmony remained... and the real reason

## Parshat Shemot - The Holy Song of Songs

*“I said to her: ‘Why, King Solomon said in Shir ha-Shirim, ‘Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon,’ (Song of Songs 7:5), meaning—that this feature is, in fact, very beautiful !”*

*“Oh, Rabbi, give me a break... That may be fine for Shir ha-Shirim, but not for me !’ she retorted...”*

*“(I raised my eyes to the audience in front of me, who were all grinning, and continued:)”*

‘Fools and ignoramuses ! Do you really think King Solomon was talking about a *nose*?! He was talking about the Holy Temple ! As our Sages expounded: “Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon” – this refers to

the Temple. Just as the nose is located at the center of a person's face, so too the Holy Temple stands at the center of the world.

To measure King Solomon by your own yardstick ? ! What utter vanity and foolishness !

King Solomon writes, “*Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a G-d-fearing woman is to be praised*” (Proverbs 31:30).

Our Sages say (Sanhedrin 20a): “*Grace is deceitful*” – this refers to Moses' generation.

“*And beauty is vain*” – this refers to Joshua's generation.

“*A G-d-fearing woman is to be praised*” – this refers to Hezekiah's generation.”<sup>3</sup>

## ∞ Wellsprings of Wisdom ∞

can be summed up in a single word: cruelty !

There are times when something about one spouse bothers the other; by all means, they may discuss and speak of it with courtesy and respect, asking their partner to change a particular trait.

Such a request, however, applies only to matters in which the other person

can, in fact, improve. When the issue is something that he or she simply cannot alter (as in the present story), the remark is born of nothing but malice and cruelty.

3. Thus, the Torah of Moses and Joshua possessed the power to assist even generations steeped in “falsehood and emptiness,” whereas the Torah of Hezekiah was intended specifically for a generation marked by “fear of G-d.”

Thus, King Solomon is speaking in lofty terms, utterly beyond our worldly frame of reference. Anyone who tries to

interpret him by *their own* notions can only be deemed a fool...

Now, after this little introduction, let us continue..."

## Unquenchable Love

When Rashi set out to interpret *Shir ha-Shirim*, he revealed how it expresses the tremendous love that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* ("the Holy One, blessed be He") has for each and every Jew – an eternal love not contingent on any cause or reason in the world. As we say every day: "*Blessed are You, G-d, who loves His people Israel forever!*"

Accordingly, Rashi wrote in the opening of his commentary on *Shir ha-Shirim*:

"Solomon foresaw with the Divine Spirit that Israel would in the future endure exile after exile, destruction after destruction. In this exile, they would lament their former glory and recall the earlier love – how they were His special treasure out of all the nations – and they would say, '*I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me*

*then than now.*' (Hosea 2:7) They will remember G-d's kindness and their own guilt, and the goodness He promised to bestow upon them in the End of Days.

Therefore, Solomon composed this book by divine inspiration, in the language of a woman whose husband has gone away and who is forlorn in living widowhood. She longs for her husband, cherishing the love of her beloved; she recalls her youthful devotion to him and admits her wrongdoing.

Her beloved, anguished by her anguish, recalls the kindness of her youth, her beautiful character, and noble deeds through which He was bound to her in fierce love.

All this will make known to Israel that G-d has not abandoned them from His heart

or decreed permanent divorce; for still *she is his wife, and He is her husband, and He will yet return to her!*"

In truth, this message of unbreakable love had already been conveyed long before King Solomon wrote *Shir ha-Shirim...*

### The Love of the Jewish People

We present an excerpt from a talk delivered by Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh Shlita (*Amudeha Shiva, Shemot*, p. 2):

In His great love for the Jewish people, G-d gave us the *Chamisha Chumshei Torah* (Five Books of the Torah). Indeed, if we examine the opening verse of each of these five books, we discover that all of them express G-d's affection for Israel – revelations of His love and kindness toward His people.

Let us briefly detail them:

Genesis begins: "*In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth.*" (Genesis 1:1) – Rashi comments that it means: "For the sake of Israel, who are called '*the beginning of His harvest.*'"<sup>4</sup> Israel is the

*reishit*, the beginning, that G-d had in mind from the start.

Exodus begins: "*These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each man and his household came*" (Exodus 1:1). Rashi comments: "Even though He already counted them by name in their lifetime, He counted them again after their death – to make known His affection for them, for they are compared to the stars, which G-d brings out and brings in by number and by name."

Leviticus begins: "*And He called to Moses, and G-d spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying...*" (Leviticus 1:1). Rashi explains: "For every saying, every utterance, and every

---

### ∞ Wellsprings of Wisdom ∞

---

4. "Israel is G-d's hallowed portion, His first fruits of the harvest;

*All who devour him shall bear guilt; Evil shall come upon them—declares the L-rd.*" (Jeremiah 2:3)

command, there was a preceding call (a summons of affection)... But to the prophets of the nations of the world, G-d revealed Himself with language of randomness and impurity." G-d's *call* to Moses at the start of Leviticus is a language of endearment, showing how beloved Israel's premier prophet is.

Numbers begins: "*And G-d spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, on the first of the second month in the second year after they left the land of Egypt, saying...*" (Numbers 1:1). Rashi notes: "Because of His affection for them, He counts them at every moment. When they went out of Egypt, He counted them; when many fell at the sin of the Golden Calf, He counted them to know the number of the survivors; and when He desired to have His Presence rest upon them, He counted them."

Deuteronomy begins: "*These are the words that Moses*

*addressed to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan—in the wilderness, in the Arabah, opposite Suf, between Paran and Tophel and Lavan, and Hazeroth and Di-Zahav...*" (Deuteronomy 1:1). Here, Moses lists place names instead of explicitly mentioning the sins Israel committed in those places, as Rashi explains: "Since these are words of rebuke... he expressed them in hints, out of respect for Israel." Even when reproofing them, G-d (through Moses) spares Israel's dignity, which itself is an expression of His love.

Thus, the very beginning of the entire Torah – and the beginning of each of its books – proclaims G-d's love for Israel. It emphasizes that the whole Torah was given to Israel and serves to reveal G-d's love for Israel in every situation!<sup>15</sup>

After this introduction, we can begin exploring our Torah

---

 **Wellsprings of Wisdom** 

5. We bring an excerpt from a talk delivered by the Lubavitcher Rebbe (*Likkutei Sichot*, vol. 3, p. 241):

"The bond between the Children of Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, transcends all reckoning and remains whole

## Parshat Shemot - The Joy of Impurity

portion, Parashat Shemot, the portion that commences the Egyptian exile – the exile

that encompasses all exiles of Israel. But first, one more introduction...

### The Joy of Impurity

G-d created two opposite realities: the first is the realm of holiness, and the second is the realm of impurity. Of course, there are many differences between these two realms, and the holy books discuss them at

length. For now, let us present the distinction given by the holy Rabbi Natan of Breslov ZY”A in one of his works:<sup>6</sup>

Know that the feeling of joy is the core of life. And know also that true joy is found and

---

#### ∞ Wellsprings of Wisdom ∞

---

under every circumstance. As the saying of our sages goes, "Whether so or so, they are My children, and it is impossible to exchange them for another nation."

This is alluded to in the phrase, "And it is impossible ever to restore even a single Jewish soul" (*Mishneh Torah*, Circumcision 1:18)—it is impossible ever to revoke or annul the covenant that G-d forged with Israel.

This applies not only to the Jewish people as a whole but to every individual Jew: G-d has bound Himself to each and every one with a tie that can never be undone. He loves every Jew with an essential love.

As the Baal Shem Tov taught, each Jew is as precious to the Almighty as an only child born to parents in their old age—and even more so.

The purpose of creation—G-d's having made the world "For the sake of Israel, who are called '*the beginning of His harvest*'"—is not only for the nation of Israel collectively but for every single Jew in particular; upon each individual rests the entire aim of creation. Therefore, everyone must say, "For my sake, the world was created." Consequently, "Whoever sustains a single Jewish soul—it is as though he had sustained an entire world," for if, Heaven forbid, one Jew was lacking, the whole creation would be deficient.

And since "it is impossible ever to restore (disconnect) even a single Jewish soul," the connection between every Jew and G-d is always intact in its full strength; it only needs to be revealed."

6. *Likkutei Halachot*, Laws of *Nefilat Apayim*, Halachah 4, § 5.

revealed only in the realm of holiness.

In contrast, in the realm of impurity, there is no feeling of true joy whatsoever. On the contrary, in the realm of impurity are manifest feelings of sadness and depression, bitterness and self-loathing.

Indeed, as long as the realm of impurity is dominated by sadness, it cannot harm or impede the people of Israel at all! For without a revelation of the feeling of joy, there can be no vitality or will; lacking that, [the forces of impurity] are essentially dead.

Only when [impurity] begins to feel *joy* does it become capable of causing damage.

And how does joy reach the impure realm?

Through sins and transgressions! When a Jew sins, he casts sparks of holiness into the impure realm, causing a mixture of good and evil. That is, a Jew is very holy, and when he sins, he surrenders some of his

holy strength to impurity. Thus, fragments and sparks of holiness become intermingled with evil... And since the entire essence of the holy sparks is joy, it turns out that when a Jew sins, he injects joy into the realm of impurity!

In doing so, he casts holy sparks into the impure realm and gives power and dominion to the forces of evil (the *kelipot*, "husks" of impurity).

Consequently, the primary exile of the Shechinah (Divine Presence) and the exile of the Assembly of Israel is expressed in joy itself being in exile. When joy has fallen into exile, it creates a situation in which joy has been drawn into the idolaters and the wicked who follow their own corrupt desires.

In truth, they are far removed from real joy, as it is written: "*He who begets a fool does it to his sorrow; the father of a fool has no joy.*" (Proverbs 17:21) and "*For all [the wicked man's] days are pains and vexation.*" (Ecclesiastes 2:23). The *Sitra Achra* ("the Other Side," i.e., the forces of evil) is called

'Grief and Sighing,' as is known, and whatever semblance of joy they have derives only from the Shechinah's being in exile – and it is the joy of Israel that is now in exile among them. It is from

there that they receive sparks of joy which fell among them in exile, and it is their source of momentary joy.

Now, let us discuss Egypt for a moment...

## The Descent of the Jews

In the year 2108, from creation, the soul of *Yaakov Avinu* (Jacob, our forefather) descended to the world, and from that moment on, he served his Creator with absolute and complete truth and self-sacrifice. All of his life, Jacob devoted himself to serving G-d – with perfect sincerity and wholeness, with all of his might.

When Jacob was 84 years old, his life's service took on a new, radiant dimension. Jacob married Rachel and Leah and lived with them in true harmony, with unity of heart – and through the genuine peace that dwelled in his home, he merited the dwelling of the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence), and he was able to draw down from the upper *sefirot* twelve sacred, mighty souls – the

Twelve G-dly Tribes, twelve sons who became a chariot and throne for the Holy Shechinah, establishing the presence of the Divine in the world.

When Jacob was 130 years old, he descended together with his entire family to Egypt. Even there, in the land of Egypt, Jacob and his sons continued to serve their Creator with all their might. Through the power of their holy service, they drew a great light – the illumination of the Infinite One, blessed be He – constraining it to abide within the land of Egypt! Without a moment's pause, with constant devotion, they kept up their divine service, and by doing so, the endless light of G-d was revealed with ever greater intensity, "binding itself to them and uniting with them in a

great revelation at an exalted level with immense light."

However, over the course of many years, the descendants of those Twelve G-dly Tribes began to intermingle with the Egyptian nation. The lusts of Egypt, the forbidden passions, disgraceful desires, and latent evil – all of these began to coil around the souls of Jacob's children and choke them from every side.

As the Midrash says:<sup>7</sup> “*And the land was filled with them*” (*Exodus 1:7*) – *Rabbi Yochanan said: [the Israelites] filled the land of Egypt. They even filled all the theaters and circuses.*” Picture the scene: Egyptians would go up to the ticket booth to buy tickets for a show, and the ticket seller would say, “Sorry, sold out!” The Egyptians would raise an eyebrow in surprise: “Sold out? But look what a huge amphitheater you have here?!” The ticket seller would wring her hands and whisper, “You're right... but you see, we have Jewish immigrant

families here, and each family has, on average, tens of children, and they bought up all of the tickets!” The Egyptians, upon hearing this, flew into a rage... “*And they came to dread the children of Israel*” (*Exodus 1:12*).

Meanwhile, the people of Israel – who by then were already deep in the grip of their evil inclination – continued to hurtle headlong toward the abyss. Little by little, the distinct traits of Jacob's children faded away, and in their place, evil Egyptian characteristics began to appear. As the Pesach Haggadah says about the Egyptians' effect on us: “*Va-yare'u otanu ha-Mitzrim*” – “*The Egyptians made us evil*” – they turned us into wicked sinners; they made us into ‘Egyptians.’

By the power of those sins and transgressions, countless sparks of joy fell into the realm of impurity. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, suddenly received a large infusion of *joie de vivre* and vitality...

## A New King Arose

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, was already a very old man. He had appointed Joseph as viceroy, and Joseph served in that role for 80 years. After Joseph died, at least another 20 years passed until his brother Levi died as well, the last of the twelve tribes. Only after Levi's death did Pharaoh issue his decrees.

Thus, we must understand the verse: "*A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph*" (Exodus 1:8). Was he indeed a "new" king? ! He had been ruling for at least 110 years by then!

The answer is simple: Pharaoh had indeed been an old, weary man – but once the sparks of holiness fell to the side of impurity, Pharaoh received from it an

immense rejuvenation (renewal and joy are thus one and the same). His spirit was revived, bursting with energy and enthusiasm! A fiery drive of renewal blazed within him – an *alien fire* – and he could not sit still. After a few days of staggering about as if drunk on the high seas, he got down to business:

*"The Egyptians enslaved the children of Israel with crushing harshness. They embittered their lives with hard labor, with mortar and bricks and all kinds of work in the field; all the work they made them do with crushing labor"* (Exodus 1:13–14).

For decades on end, the fiery zeal of "impure renewal" continued to burn in Pharaoh's heart...

## The Footsteps of Redemption Are Near...

Before we continue, let's refresh our memory with some essential history:

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan in the year 2018 to Creation, when *Avraham Avinu* (Abraham our

Forefather) was seventy years old and secluded in the field in devout prayer to his Maker, he merited a divine revelation. The sun had begun to sink westward, the blue sky was tinted with hues

## Parshat Shemot - The Footsteps of Redemption Are Near...

of red and orange, a gentle breeze blew softly... and Abraham our father – the greatest of giants – attained that coveted state called “the trance of prophecy.” As it is written: “*And it came to pass, that, when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram...*” (Genesis 15:12).

In that awe-inspiring vision (the “Covenant between the Parts”), G-d revealed Himself to Abraham and spread out before him the map of the world’s *tikkun* (rectification). He unveiled to him the blueprint for bringing the world to its ultimate purpose and destiny. Abraham looked at the outline and was horrified – “*And lo, a dread, a great darkness, fell upon him*” (Genesis 15:12) – for he saw everything that his descendants, the people of Israel, would suffer at the hands of the nations: all the thousands of years of persecution, slaughter, cruelty, and wickedness...

G-d went on to disclose to him: *Know that this road will begin with the birth of your son, Isaac.* From the moment of his birth, 400

years of sojourning in a land not theirs will commence. As it says: “*And He said to Abram, ‘Know that your seed shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years’*” (Genesis 15:13). Thirty years passed from that vision, and – exactly on that same date, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan in the year 2048 from Creation – *Yitzchak Avinu* (Isaac our father) was born, and the countdown of the ‘400-year exile’ began...

These hundreds of years were extremely turbulent, and they spanned the Torah portions from the middle of Vayera through Chayei Sarah, Toldot, Vayetze, Vayishlach, Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash, Vayechi, and the first two chapters of the Book of Exodus. Then, the final year – the 400<sup>th</sup> year – arrived at last.

That year, 2447 to creation, is described in Parashat Shemot (from chapter 3 onward) and in the portions of Va’era and Bo.

And thus the third chapter of the Book of Exodus begins: “*Moses was tending the flock of*

*Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the wilderness, and came to the mountain of G-d, to Horeb*" (Exodus 3:1). On the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, Moses – who was then eighty years old – secluded himself in the field with his Maker in prayer – and merited a revelation of G-d.

In that revelation, G-d unfolded before Moses the blueprint of the redemption... which Moses refused !

Moses argued: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should take the children of

*Israel out of Egypt ? !*" (Exodus 3:11). Rashi explains that Moses put forth two objections:

1. "Who am I" – meaning, *I am unimportant; how can I speak with kings ?*
2. "And how could I bring the children of Israel out ?" – *and even if I were important, what merit do the people of Israel have that You should perform a miracle for them, that I should bring them out of Egypt ?*

In other words, what merit do the people of Israel have to deserve redemption ? !

## Believers, Sons of Believers

Our Sages said in the Midrash (Shemot Rabbah 3:12):

At that moment, Moses spoke improperly. G-d had told him, "They will hearken to your voice" (Exodus 3:18), yet he said, "But they will not believe me" (Exodus 4:1)! Immediately, G-d answered him... "You are to be punished for speaking slander about My children. They are believers, the sons of believers !"

In a talk delivered by my father, the saintly Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel ZY" A (*Imrei Noam*, Shemot – Discourse 9), he explained as follows:

In our Torah portion, it is related that G-d revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush and charged him with the holy mission of going to inform the people of Israel that the time of their redemption from Egypt had

arrived. Moses argued that it was quite possible that the people of Israel would not believe him—that G-d had indeed appeared to him and sent him to them. As it is said: “*But they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice; for they will say: ‘G-d did not appear to you’*” (Exodus 4:1).

In response, G-d gave Moses three miraculous signs to perform in front of the people of Israel; when they would see these signs, they would believe that he was G-d’s true messenger:

The first sign: G-d instructed Moses to throw down the staff from his hand, and immediately, the staff turned into a snake. Then G-d told him to grasp the snake by its tail, and as soon as he did so, the snake turned back into a staff.

The second sign: G-d instructed Moses to insert his hand into his bosom (under his garment), and when he drew it out, his hand was entirely leprous, white as snow. Then G-d told him to put his hand back into his

bosom, and when he drew it out again, it had returned to normal.

The third sign: G-d told him to take water from the Nile and pour it on the ground; when he would do so, the water on the ground would turn to blood.

On the simple level (*peshat*), these three signs were meant to convince the people of Israel to believe that Moses was telling the truth and that he had indeed come at G-d’s behest to redeem them.

However, the holy Rabbi Yaakov Abuhatzeira ZY”A (whose yahrzeit, 20<sup>th</sup> Tevet, always falls in close proximity to this parashah) explains in his brilliant work *Pituchei Chotam* (Parashat Shemot) that these miracles also served to teach Moses a very important lesson:

G-d intended these signs as a response to Moses’ claim that the people of Israel would not believe him. Through these signs, G-d sought to show him that the people of Israel are, in fact, *believers, the sons of believers*, for they are a holy seed, the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob.<sup>8</sup> What appears now — that they are obstinate and of little faith — is only because they have been exiled from their natural environment in the Holy Land and are enslaved in exile under hard labor, and their minds are driven

to distraction. A person settled at home cannot be compared to one who has been exiled to a foreign place. But the moment they return to their proper place and level, they will surely return to their holiness and faith.

---

*Wellsprings of Wisdom*

---

**8.** In this connection, Rabbi Shlomo Levinstein Shlita related the following tale (U'Matok Ha-Or, Genesis 3, p. 518):

One of the disciples of the saintly Rabbi Yisrael Hager, the "Ahavat Yisrael" of Vizhnitz, enrolled his sons in a gymnasium.

Later, when that chassid visited his Rebbe, the latter warned him that unless he immediately withdrew the boys and placed them in proper traditional Jewish schooling, he would no longer be welcome in the Rebbe's court.

The chassid refused to listen, preferring to leave the court of the Ahavat Yisrael and go instead to the Rebbe's brother, the saintly Rabbi Chaim Hager, the "Tal Chaim" of Antinea ZY"A.

When he arrived, the gabbai and the chassidim wished to bar his entry to the Rebbe, yet to their surprise, the Rebbe instructed them to treat him with honor—and so it was during the Shabbat prayers and likewise at the Shabbat meals.

At the close of Shabbat, when the visitor came to take his leave, the Rebbe

urged him to remain until the following day and accompany him on his daily walk, which the doctors had prescribed.

The chassid agreed. After leaving the Rebbe's room, he asked the gabbai what time the Rebbe would set out.

"What concern is that of yours?" the gabbai replied.

"In all innocence," answered the chassid, "the Rebbe asked me to join him."

"*You* are going walking with the Rebbe? *You*? Only the greatest and most select chassidim merit that!"

The next day, they went out together. The Rebbe told the chassid that when he was a child, they studied with the *melamed* indoors and hardly ever saw daylight. There were no recesses, much less any ventilation or the comforts such as we know today. How great would the children's joy be when spring arrived at last, and the *melamed*'s wife drove them outdoors to enable her to clean for Passover! They spilled into the yard, and when the *melamed* tried to teach them there, it was to no avail.

Therefore, G-d gave Moses three signs that demonstrated to him that something remaining in its proper place is incomparably different from when it is taken out of its element:

First, He showed him that when he *threw the staff out of his hand* – out of its natural place – it turned into a snake. But as soon as he grasped it again, it reverted to being a staff.

Next, G-d told Moses to *place his hand in his bosom*, for the bosom is the natural place where the hand is kept safe. When he then took it out, it was leprous, but

when he returned it to his bosom, it was healed and restored.

Finally, G-d told him to take water from its natural place in the Nile, and when he poured it out onto the ground (far from its element), it turned to blood.

Rabbi Yaakov concludes with these holy words:

*"All these signs were to show Moses that place is the determining factor: anything that remains in its root and proper place retains its true quality, whereas that which leaves its source is altered. Therefore,*

---

### ∞ Wellsprings of Wisdom ∞

Finally, the *melamed* said, "I see you all cannot concentrate; let us go for a stroll."

"So we walked around the village," continued the Rebbe, "and the *melamed* stopped at every tree, explaining how one could identify it by trunk and leaf: 'This is an apple tree, that one a carob,' and so on.

"At the day's end, we returned home, happy and excited. The next morning, we came early to the street where the *melamed* lived, and we all stood by a tree at the corner and tried to classify it. I insisted it was an apple tree; my friend said it was a mulberry..." In short, we discovered that

we had not properly absorbed a word of what the teacher had told us the day before.

"But two months later"—the Rebbe fixed his gaze on the chassid—"we knew precisely which tree was which, for by then the fruit had appeared."

The words struck home, and the chassid withdrew his sons from the gymnasium and enrolled them in Jewish schools.

He understood that for his children to be pure fruit that he could be proud of, he would have to send them to proper Jewish schooling.

## Parshat Shemot - Believers, Sons of Believers

*[G-d] showed him [these signs] and said to him: Do not wonder about the children of Israel. Even though you see them now as stiff-necked, it is the result of them having left their natural place. Right now, they are in a foreign land, a place of impurity. But when they return to their proper place – the holy land – they will return to their holy state."*

In this way, G-d wanted to instill in Moses a most fundamental insight, one that must be clear to every leader of Israel if he is to succeed in his mission. First and foremost, a leader must know that within every Jew, wherever he may be, there lies mighty faith in the Almighty – a faith that even the person himself is not fully aware of.

Therefore, even a Jew who has strayed very far from the path of Torah and mitzvot – *by virtue of* the fact that he is a Jew, a son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – you can be certain that deep inside, he

believes in G-d with perfect faith. As it says in the holy *Tanya*, even the most irreligious Jews, the "lightweights" and transgressors of Israel, will – *for the most part* – give up their lives to sanctify G-d's Name; they will endure harsh torture rather than deny the oneness of G-d – and these are people who never studied G-d's greatness at all (*Tanya*, ch. 18).

Every Jew, from the depths of his heart, loves G-d and desires to cleave to Him and to His Torah. It is only his evil inclination that confuses and misleads him, injecting a spirit of folly into his heart (*Sotah* 3a) and tempting him to violate the will of the Creator – but that is not his true desire at all.<sup>9</sup>

This is the idea of the verse, "*In a multitude of people is a king's glory*" (*Proverbs* 14:28). Our Sages note that the Hebrew word for "people" (*am*) can also mean "dimmed coals" (*gachalim omemot*) – that is, coals which on the

---

••• *Wellsprings of Wisdom* •••

---

9. Rabbi Eliezer Shlomo Schick (ZY"A) writes (*Magen Avot* 4:13):

As is well known, the human soul is "a veritable part of G-d above." The Holy

## Parshat Shemot - Believers, Sons of Believers

One, blessed be He, clothed that soul in a physical, material body and placed it in this material world so that we might transform this world into the World-to-Come—by revealing and proclaiming His true existence within the "contraction" and the "vacated space" that is this world.

This is what He desired, as our Sages said (Midrash Tanchuma, Naso 16): "From the day the Holy One, blessed be He, created His world, He yearned to dwell in the lower realms." Therefore, He gave us the commandments: every mitzvah is a channel through which the reality of G-d is drawn into the world. Because the mitzvot are vested in tangible, physical acts, when a person performs one, he acquires the means that help him reach his goal—to reveal and publicize G-d's true Being from within worldly physicality until the radiance banishes the darkness entirely, since "a little light drives away much darkness."

But if a person commits even a single sin—G-d forbid—he drives the Shechinah away.

As our Sages said (Sotah 3a): "At first, before Israel sinned, the Shechinah dwelled within each individual; once they sinned, they caused the Shechinah to withdraw." By transgressing, one acquires an accuser that prosecutes him and obscures G-d's true Being; the sinner himself brings about the concealment of the Divine Presence.

Even so, one must know that sin is no cause for despair. As long as a person lives, he must never give up—even if he

has darkened the entire world with heresy and atheism, he can still return in perfect repentance. The very moment he repents, he dons a shield—"repentance is a shield against calamity" (Avot 4:11)—so that the impure forces and the *sitra achra* cannot break him; instead, he draws upon himself the pleasant sweetness and the closeness of the glow of G-d's light.

Our holy Sages say (Shemot Rabbah 23:10): "*Like the curtains of Solomon*" (Song of Songs 1:5)—just as a garment becomes soiled and then turns white again, so too, the people of Israel, though they sin, may return in repentance to the Holy One, blessed be He. Repentance is exceedingly precious to Him; even if a person has committed the gravest offense, repentance is still of supreme value. As our Sages taught (Tanna de-Bei Eliyahu Rabbah 4): "The Holy One, blessed be He, says: If a person sins before Me and then repents, I act with him in mercy; I accept his repentance and do not recall even a fraction of his transgressions."

Therefore, let nothing in the world break you. Strive to multiply your mitzvot and good deeds, to reveal and broadcast to the whole world that there is absolutely nothing besides Him, blessed be He—that the inanimate, plant, animal, and sentient realms are but the very vitality of the Divine enclothed in these forms. In this way, you will have a shield and armor against every misfortune.

Even if you feel you have fallen to the deepest depths, to the nethermost

outside appear extinguished, but in truth still burn on the inside; when one blows on them, they immediately blaze up into fire.

So too it is, indeed, with even the simplest Jew among the people of Israel. Although outwardly it may seem that his faith in G-d is snuffed out, in his inner essence, a fire of pure faith in the Almighty still smolders. All that is needed is to blow upon it a breath of life and reveal it! And therefore, even from such Jews, G-d derives abundant honor and glory – for they too are His people.

This, then, was G-d's contention with Moses: Why do you say about the people of Israel, "They will not believe me" (Exodus 4:1)? Do you think that because they are steeped in forty-nine levels of impurity,

they have no faith? Not so! Their faith lies in a place so deep in their heart that no impurity in the world can ever reach it.

Israel are *believers, the sons of believers*. The fact that so-and-so publicly desecrates Shabbat or another person dresses immodestly, or the like – this in no way proves that he or she has no faith. Faith resides in the depths of every Jew's heart, and nothing in the world can uproot it.

In addition to Rabbi Yaakov Abuhatzeira's wonderful explanation, we can add yet another matter of great importance that was hinted by commanding Moses to cast down the staff in his hand to the ground – whereupon the staff immediately turned into a snake – and afterward commanding him to

---

*Wellsprings of Wisdom*

---

pit—denying the very root of faith, may the Merciful One save us—still remember what our Sages said (Pesikta de-Rav Kahana 24:12): "Return, O Israel, unto the L-rd your G-d, for you have stumbled in your iniquity" (Hosea 14:2). Even if one has denied the

fundamentals of the Jewish faith, even if a person stands in the marketplace reviling and blaspheming, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to him: "Repent privately between Me and you, and I will accept you!" Such is His boundless compassion!

## Parshat Shemot - The Keys of the World in His Hands !

grasp the snake's tail – whereupon it turned back into a staff:

G-d was preparing Moses for his mission as a leader of Israel – the *staff* (*mateh*) symbolizes the harsh mode of leadership – the approach that *strikes* wrongdoers for every misdeed and forces them into line, as our Sages say: "Take a stick and hit them on the head" (Sanhedrin 8a).

G-d instructed Moses to cast the staff out of his hand – that is, to desist from this approach of constantly prodding and searching out Israel's sins; the nation of Israel cannot survive under a harsh regime.

G-d then turned the staff into a *snake* to hint to Moses that instead, he must be "soft and flexible" like a snake – able to bend, as it were – and learn to deal patiently with each and every person's particular – and often peculiar – disposition. Only through gentleness and

great patience can he succeed in bringing all of Israel under the wings of the Divine Presence.

Even so, G-d ordered Moses to grasp the snake by the tail, whereupon it turned back into a staff – to hint that in certain exceptional cases when the leader encounters brazen, insolent individuals whom no amount of gentle words and pleasant methods can influence, he is permitted to take hold of the very tip of the "staff" approach and knock them with words of rebuke and reproof – and at times even actual punishment. But immediately afterward, he must return to the usual mode of leadership – following the ways of the holy Torah, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace" (Proverbs 3:17).

After G-d had answered Moses' second argument ("What merit does Israel have?"), He proceeded to answer the first argument ("Who am I?")

### The Keys of the World in His Hands !

Parashat Bechukotai begins with the verse: "If you walk in

*My statutes...*" (Leviticus 26:3). Our Sages expound (Avodah

## Parshat Shemot - The Keys of the World in His Hands !

Zarah 5a) that the word “if” here is expressed as a plea – as if G-d, so to speak, is entreating us and asking each one of us: “*Please, My dear children... walk in My statutes.*” And the statute we are commanded with the words “*if you walk in My statutes*” is none other than laboring in Torah. In Rashi’s words: “*If you walk in My statutes’ – that you will toil in the Torah.*” In other words, please toil in the study of My Torah to the fullest extent of your abilities.

In reward for doing so, G-d promises us: “*And I will give your rains in their time...*” (Leviticus 26:4). The term “*your rains*” symbolizes all the blessings and influences in this physical world – both spiritual influences and material sustenance – *all of it*, I will place in your hands !<sup>10</sup> A true Torah student (*ben Torah*) who toils in Torah with all his might, with love, dedication, and effort – G-d entrusts into his hands all the keys of the world !<sup>11</sup>

---

 ••• *Wellsprings of Wisdom* •••
 

---

**10.** As the holy Rabbi Moshe Elikim Beriah of Kozhnicz writes in his work *Kohelet Moshe* (Parashat Bechukotai).

**11.** The Lubavitcher Rebbe (*Likkutei Sichot*, vol. 3, p. 276) explains that the reason that the Torah employs the term ‘chok’ in the verse “*If you walk in My statutes*” (Leviticus 26:3) is to teach that we must engrave the words of Torah upon our hearts.

To further clarify, there is a distinction between writing and engraving.

When letters are written with ink on parchment, the ink and the parchment remain two separate entities that merely adhere to each other and can,

therefore, be separated. When letters are engraved on stone, however, they become a single entity with the stone and can no longer be removed.

Thus, the Torah says, “*If you walk in My statutes*,” meaning that the Torah we learn must be engraved upon the heart, becoming an inseparable part of our very being, like letters hewn into stone, rather than remaining detached, like ink on parchment.

How does one achieve such a level, where the Torah is engraved upon the heart and becomes one with the learner? In answer, Rashi comments that “*If you walk in My statutes*” means “*that you toil in the Torah.*”

## Parshat Shemot - The Keys of the World in His Hands !

In the famous words of the holy *Or ha-Chaim* (commentary to Exodus 14:27):

*"The Holy One, blessed be He, made a condition with all of creation at the very beginning, that [the creation] be subject to the Torah and to those who toil in it – to do whatever they decree upon it. Their rule over the forces of nature is like the rule of the Creator Himself!"*

Accordingly, you will also find – besides the episode of the splitting of the sea – that the heavens and the earth, the

stars, the sun, and the moon, were dominated by the righteous, just as G-d ordained them at the time of Creation.

*This is the secret of what is said: 'And now, thus says G-d who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel...' (Isaiah 43:1). Our Sages of blessed memory said (Vayikra Rabbah 36:4) that the Holy One said to His world: Who created you and who formed you? – Israel, and this all by the power of the Torah..."*<sup>12</sup>

This is also the answer G-d gave to Moses regarding his

---

••• *Wellsprings of Wisdom* •••

---

Rashi's precise wording—"that you toil in the Torah," not merely "that you study Torah"—teaches that only when a person labors and exerts himself in Torah study with all his strength will the words of Torah be engraved upon his heart and become an inseparable part of his existence; if one studies without effort and exertion, this will not occur.

**12.** The holy Gemara states (Bava Batra 16a):

*"Raba said: Job sought to exempt the whole world from judgment. He said before G-d: 'Master of the universe !*

*You have created the ox with split hoofs; You have created the donkey with whole hoofs. You have created Paradise; You have created Gehenna. You have created the righteous; You have created the wicked. Who can hinder the actions of Your hand ?'*

*What did Job's companions answer him? "Even you would annul fear and diminish supplication!" (Job 15:4) – The Holy One, blessed be He, created the evil inclination—and together with it, He created the Torah as its antidote."*

## Parshat Shemot - The Keys of the World in His Hands !

first question, “Who am I... ?” (Exodus 3:11) – *What significance do I have to speak with kings ?* G-d replied: “For I will be with you.” (Exodus 3:12) – meaning, since I and the Torah are one, and you toil in the Torah with all your might, therefore I am with you ! Consequently, the authority and rulership of the world are delivered into your

hands. It follows that surely you have the power to lead the entire world – and to subdue the wicked Pharaoh in particular.

Furthermore: “See, I have made you a master over Pharaoh !” (Exodus 7:1).

Such is the power of a true *ben Torah* !



## ••• Wellsprings of Wisdom •••

In a discourse by Rabbi Shalom Schwadron (ZY”A) (*Lev Shalom*, Shemot, p. 233) he said:

When Job was beset by suffering, his friends came to console him. During their consolation, Job argued that just as the nature of the ox and the donkey is immutable, so too, the nature of the wicked and the righteous cannot be changed.

His friends replied that this is not so, for “I created the evil inclination—I

created the Torah as an antidote,” meaning the Torah changes a person's nature.

From here, the *Sabba of Kelm* (ZY”A) concluded that without Torah, Job is indeed right: indeed, without Torah, one could not possibly break or alter undesirable character traits. The only way to overcome the evil inclination is through the Torah, “which was created as an antidote.”

## *Summary and Practical Conclusions*

1. One who wishes to be spared the birth pangs of the Moshiach should occupy himself with Torah study and deeds of kindness. For such is G-d's will: man is given the choice – either to toil in the Torah or suffer the pains of exile. If one merits to toil in the holy Torah, he can fulfill the obligation of the bitter exile through distress over the fact that our Temple is destroyed – and that alone will suffice. But if a person's hands slacken from the holy Torah, he will, Heaven forbid, have to undergo actual suffering and subjugation.

2. A person must know that even if he has sinned, he must never despair! So long as a person is alive, he is forbidden to give up hope under any circumstances. Even if he has darkened the entire world with transgression and heresy, he can still return in complete *teshuvah* (repentance)!

Even if one thinks that he has fallen to the lowest depths – descending deep into She'ol (the nethermost underworld) – he should remember what our holy Sages taught about the verse, “*Return, O Israel, unto G-d your G-d, for you*

*have stumbled in your sin*” (Hosea 14:2): Even if you have denied the very foundation of faith – even if a person stood in the marketplace blaspheming and insulting G-d – the Holy One, blessed be He, says to him: *Just repent between Me and you, and I will accept you!* So great is His mercy; may He be blessed.

3. A Jew who merits to toil in the Torah will merit to see the verse “*For I will be with you*” fulfilled in himself. Since G-d and the Torah are one, it follows that whoever labors in Torah with all his ability has G-d's Presence with him! G-d entrusts all the workings of the world into that person's hand, and he is granted the power to direct nature according to his will. Likewise, all of the channels of blessing in this world – both spiritual blessings and material benefits – G-d places under the control of the *ben Torah* who toils in Torah with all his might, with love, with dedication and exertion. That is the power of the *ben Torah*!

4. A *ben Torah* must realize that although there is tremendous value in *hitbodedut* (solitary seclusion in devotion

## Parshat Shemot - Summary and Practical Conclusions

to G-d) – it is the “handle by which one grasps the intellect” – nevertheless, one may not ignore the will of G-d, who desires that

His creatures recognize and serve Him! Thus, one has an obligation to act to reveal His sovereignty in the world!

**Shabbat Shalom!**



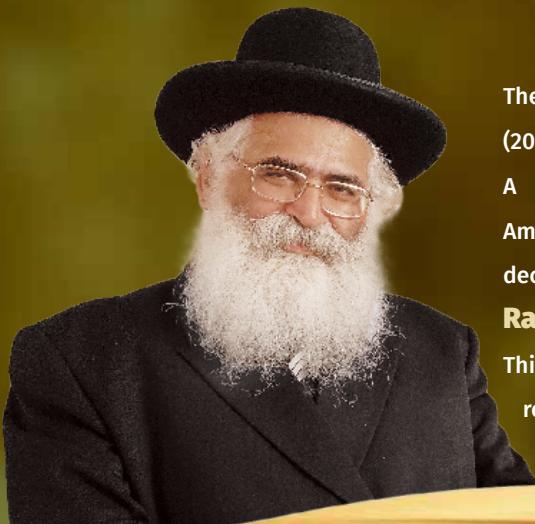
New

Delivered in special



## 'Betzur Yarum' - Soft Cover

# Travel edition



The original set, first printed in 5767 (2007), consisting of 17 volumes. A fascinating interpretation on "Likutei Amarim", the first part of Tanya, culled from decades of lessons by our venerable teacher, **Rabbi Yoram Abargel**, of blessed memory. This series provides endless practical tools and real life advice for every Jew in all areas of life.



For orders:  
📞 +1 (347) 352-8125  
 666 HaKatzir Street, Netivot





# WEEKLY ENGLISH ZOOM CLASS

with  
**RABBI ISRAEL ABARGEL** shlita

**FOLLOWED BY Q&A  
EVERY SUNDAY**

California Time - 08:00 AM

Colorado Time - 09:00 AM

Florida Time - 11:00 AM

Israel Time - 18:00 PM



[www.zoom.us/j/4459755725](https://www.zoom.us/j/4459755725)

For details:

 **(347) 352 - 8125**



New!

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

New and rare books from his teachings have been published:



## ❖ Beshir Yarum ❖

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

## ❖ Yarum Meshalo ❖

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



## ❖ Shufrei DeYosef ❖

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



Hurry to order: 08-931-1785  
[shop.hameir-laarets.org.il](http://shop.hameir-laarets.org.il)

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



# New!

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

New and rare books from his teachings have been published:



## ❖ Imrei Noam ❖

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

## ❖ Hameir L'Yisrael ❖

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



## ❖ Betzur Yarum ❖

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



Hurry to order: 08-931-1785  
[shop.hameir-laarets.org.il](http://shop.hameir-laarets.org.il)

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



## Shabbat Times Shemot

21st of Tevet, 5786

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:29 pm	5:32 pm	6:00 pm
Miami	5:29 pm	6:25 pm	7:00 pm
Los Angeles	4:44 pm	5:43 pm	6:15 pm
Montreal	4:12 pm	5:20 pm	5:44 pm
Toronto	4:41 pm	5:48 pm	6:13 pm
London	3:54 pm	5:10 pm	5:25 pm
Jerusalem	4:37 pm	5:29 pm	6:01 pm
Tel Aviv	4:33 pm	5:25 pm	5:56 pm
Haifa	4:31 pm	5:26 pm	5:56 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:35 pm	5:30 pm	6:01 pm

### Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

**HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l**

In your heart—meaning in your thoughts—there should be purity. A person should cultivate a refined heart, free of any flaw, and remember that everything comes from Heaven. One must not allow resentment or negative thoughts toward any fellow Jew to enter the heart, because such thoughts block the channels of blessing.

Someone who holds grudges against other Jews causes blessing to be withheld from his own household; his children struggle to succeed because his heart is filled with resentment.



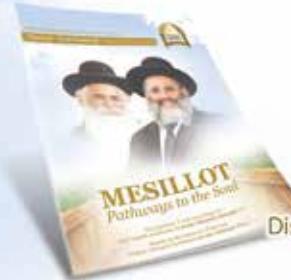
## Become a Partner!

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](http://Hameir-Laarets.org.il/Donate)  
+ (954) 800-6526

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

TAX DEDUCTIBLE ORGANIZATION



## Do You Enjoy Mesilot?

Distribute Pathways to the Soul in  
Your Synagogue!

## Receive Mesilot Weekly Anywhere Worldwide!

- Free of Charge -

Join Now!



Ask The Rabbi!



## Media



[hameir-laarets.org.il/en](http://hameir-laarets.org.il/en)

Hameir Laarets

(954) 800-6526

054-870-8737

en@h-l.org.il

