

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 257

Tazria-Metzora | Soul Illumination Through Self-Accounting



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

Dedicated to the hatzlacha of
Gal Houston and her Family

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS


The Gift of Humiliation	1
The Rise and Fall of King Uzziah	5
Isaiah's First Humbling Prophecy	8
When Error Leads to Truth	9
The Chain of the Worlds	10
The Fragile Inner Self	11
The Path of Constant Ascent	13
The Gift of a Broken Heart	13
The Value of Cheshbon Nefesh	15
The Power of a Broken Heart	19
Life Conceived Through Affliction	20
Adam and the Mystery of Tzara'at	21
Tzara'at — A Ladder of Ascent	22
<i>Summary and Practical Conclusions</i>	<i>24</i>



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 Tazria Metzora

The Gift of Humiliation

One of the most famous great Jewish leaders of recent generations was the holy Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heshel, the Ohev Yisrael of Apta, of saintly memory. In his early years he served as rabbi in the town of Kalbasov in Galicia, where he held the post for 15 years, and during those years he suffered terrible poverty. Thereafter he moved to the town of Apta (Opatów), where his name became renowned, and where he served as rabbi for 8 years. He then moved to the city of Iasi in Romania, and after the passing of the holy Rabbi Baruch of Medzibuz, he moved to Medzibuz and remained there until the end of his life.

From the period of his rabbinate in Apta, a number of stories have been preserved, and here is one of them, as told by Rabbi Aryeh Leibish

Halberstam, may his merit shield us (*Aryeh Sha'ag*, vol. V, p. 117):

One day the Ohev Yisrael turned to the members of his beit din in Apta and said, "I need to travel to the city of Warsaw to meet with some of the government officials there on behalf of the community." His colleagues wished him success, and he set out on the road.

The Ohev Yisrael settled into the wagon, opened a Gemara and became absorbed in study. After a few hours of traveling, the wagon driver suddenly halted the carriage, turned to the rabbi and said, "Rebbe, we're in trouble!"

"What happened?" the rabbi asked.

"I have just found out," said the wagoner, "that tomorrow a very important state event is taking place in the city of Warsaw.

People from all ends of the country are traveling there, and the roads are extremely congested..."

After a long, exhausting, bone-rattling journey, they finally arrived in Warsaw.

The Ohev Yisrael paid the wagoner, got down from the carriage, and entered an inn, asking to rent a room. "None available. We don't have a single free room."

"As you may know, I am the rabbi of Apta; perhaps you could still find a place for me?"

The innkeepers began to laugh at him and mock him. The Ohev Yisrael left there humiliated and went to another inn. But there the same story repeated itself – they too laughed at him and ridiculed him...

After a few hours of wandering, he realized he had no choice, and he turned to a public soup kitchen in the city. However, there as well, it was terribly crowded, and he barely managed to receive a crust of bread and a chair to sit on. His bones ached, and the terrible cold

that penetrated his innards added insult to injury...

After "resting" a bit, he went out to meet the government officials. But when he arrived, they informed him that he would have to wait until the state event was over.

Realizing that he would have to remain in the city for a few days, he approached the head of the Jewish community and told him that he was the rabbi of Apta and asked if he could arrange a comfortable lodging for him. But the community leader also ignored him and paid him no attention, so he returned to the soup kitchen.

In the end he succeeded in meeting with the people he needed to meet. Then he set out on the journey back home... But his saga of suffering was not yet over.

Again, the roads were terribly congested; an accident that occurred at one of the junctions jammed traffic for many hours.

The Ohev Yisrael's aching body felt as if it were about to

come apart, but he strengthened himself and thought: "Soon I will reach the city of Piotrków, which is near my hometown of Apta. Surely they will receive me warmly, and I will be able to rest from the grueling journey and the cold that I've endured..."

At long last he arrived in Piotrków. He went to an inn and said to them, "Might you have a room for the rabbi of Apta?" But they too began to laugh at him and make fun of him. Once again he found no place to stay, so he entered the *beit midrash* (study hall) where he found a small piece of bread with salt that he could eat.

After that he found a wagon headed to the town of Kelsk, which is closer to Apta, and he joined that wagon. On the way he encouraged himself: "Now, in Kelsk, I will surely lack nothing and I will finally feel at home there." But there, too, the same thing happened as in Piotrków.

Two days passed for him there in hunger and utter destitution. Then he found a wagon traveling

to Ostrowce, which is about two hours from Apta by carriage, and he joined it. On the way he again encouraged himself: "Certainly in Ostrowce I will easily find a wagon going to my home. And even if I have to stay there, at least they will recognize me there and give me a hot meal to eat..."

At last, at five o'clock in the afternoon, he reached Ostrowce and immediately began to look for a wagon traveling to his home—but he could not find any. Not only that, but everyone who passed by looked at him as if he had just dropped in from outer space, and he was forced to stand by himself in the marketplace for many long hours, trying to find a way to return home.

Night had already fallen, and the sky was speckled with shining stars. Suddenly, he noticed a familiar face: a wagon driver from his town was passing nearby with his wagon. The rabbi approached him and asked hopefully, "Perhaps you are traveling to Apta?"

The wagoner replied, "Yes."

"May I join you?"

The wagoner replied laconically, "Yes."

The Ohev Yisrael said to him, "I will hire you on the condition that on this trip you do not allow any women to ride in the wagon."

They set off on the journey, and after a few minutes the wagon stopped and three women climbed in.

The Ohev Yisrael turned and demanded that the wagoner keep his word and politely ask them to wait for the next ride. "Didn't I make a condition with you?!"

The wagoner replied, "Dear Rebbe, this is my wife and my two daughters..."

The Ohev Yisrael felt an awful, overwhelming pain filling him, but he had no choice. He knew he had nowhere to stay overnight in Ostrowce, and they had already gone some distance from the town, so he was compelled to continue the journey.

Tired and exhausted, he lifted his eyes to the heavens

and eagerly longed to finally arrive home.

Ultimately, with a pounding heart, he stood by his front door and knocked... The door flew open, and his wife poured her wrath upon him, shouting: "Is this how you show up? You come home all of a sudden? Couldn't you let me know in advance?!"

His wife left him standing in the doorway, went into the kitchen, slammed the door behind her, and locked it with a key!

The Ohev Yisrael sat down on a chair and stared blankly ahead...

There was a knock at the door. The *shamash* (synagogue attendant) had come to wake the rabbi for the prayer service. The rabbi rose and went to immerse in the *mikveh* (ritual bath). He entered the mikveh and nearly expired; the intense cold froze his blood vessels.

After the prayer, one of the congregants held a memorial for his father and served cookies and vodka. The Ohev Yisrael

Parshat Tazria Metzora - The Rise and Fall of King Uzziah

ate and drank, and afterwards he dozed off a little. When he awoke, he felt somewhat clear-headed. He then got up from his place and went into an empty section of the shul and began to think and contemplate:

Why had this whole adventure happened to him?

He realized that because he had felt himself to be important and esteemed—imagining that everyone should honor him and listen to him—G-d decided to educate him. In an intensive "crash course," it was proved to

him that his opinion carried no weight, and that he was a nobody, even within his own house!

From the time he received this gift from Heaven—to recognize his true place—he set about working on himself, until he merited lofty spiritual heights and greatness and to have his holy name engraved on the eternal wall of honor of the Jewish people.

Surely you are asking yourselves: Although this process may be necessary, why do we nonetheless call this uncomfortable "process" a gift?

The Rise and Fall of King Uzziah

The tenth king in the Davidic royal line was King Uzziah, son of King Amaziah. When Uzziah was 16 years old, his father King Amaziah was assassinated, and in response to the murder, the people of Judah made Uzziah king as successor to his father. As it is said: "All of the people of Judah took Azariah (another name by which Uzziah was called), he being sixteen years old, and made

him king in place of his father Amaziah" (II Kings 14:21).

King Uzziah was a righteous king, as the verses testify about him: "He did what was right in the eyes of G-d, just as his father Amaziah had done" (II Kings 15:3). Because of this, the Holy One, blessed be He, assisted him, and Uzziah achieved much on behalf of the people of Israel. In the book of II Chronicles,

Parshat Tazria Metzora - The Rise and Fall of King Uzziah

chapter 26 is entirely devoted to recounting his deeds and his might. There it tells of the wars he fought against the enemies of Israel, and of his investments in building up the city of Jerusalem.

In addition, he loved the soil, and he invested greatly in agriculture. As it says there: "He built towers in the wilderness and hewed out many cisterns, for he had much cattle; and in the low country and the plains he had farmers and he had vinedressers in the hills and in the Carmel, for he cherished the soil" (II Chronicles 26:10). He continued to develop and enhance his kingdom in a most marvelous way, until "his fame spread afar, for he was wondrously assisted, until he became strong" (II Chronicles 26:15).

Then, at the pinnacle of his success, his collapse occurred.

In *Yalkut Yisrael* (Bamidbar, p. 8) it is detailed: King Uzziah devoted himself wholly to agricultural pursuits and did not involve himself in Torah study;

it was the neglect of Torah that brought him to a feeling of pride.

One day, Uzziah needed to enter the House of Study. When he entered, he asked the scholars, "What are you studying?" They answered him that they were at the verse, "And the stranger who draws near [to the Sanctuary] shall be put to death" (Numbers 1:51) – meaning that it is forbidden for anyone who is not a kohen to perform the Temple service.

Uzziah said to them, "Does that apply even to me?"

The scholars answered, "Yes."

Uzziah said to them, "Why shouldn't I be allowed?! After all, the Holy One, blessed be He, is a King and I too am a king. It is fitting for a king to serve before the King and burn incense to Him."

Since at that time he was at the peak of his meteoric rise, he decided to go and offer incense before G-d. As it is said: "But when he had become strong, his heart grew so proud that it acted corruptly, and he trespassed

Parshat Tazria Metzora - The Rise and Fall of King Uzziah

against the Lord his G-d, and he came into the Temple of G-d to burn incense on the altar of incense" (II Chronicles 26:16).

He entered the Holy Temple, took the censer, and began to stride toward the golden altar... From all sides, the priests who were there came running toward him: "Our lord the king! What are you doing? You are not allowed to do that!"

Uzziah's face turned red, and he shouted at them, "Be quiet! If not, I will kill you!"

At that moment, the entire creation trembled; the earth and the Temple shook, and the mountain by Ein Rogel split in two, and the western half of the mountain rolled a distance of four ris lengths, and the landslides caused heavy damage.

The earth approached the Holy One, blessed be He, and said: "Master of the Universe, Korach challenged the priesthood and You gave me permission to swallow him alive – give me

permission now as well, and I will swallow this man alive..."

Fire approached the Holy One and said: "Master of the Universe, two hundred and fifty men who offered incense challenged the priesthood and You gave me permission to burn them – give me permission now and I will burn him alive..."

And in the heavens above, legions of angels and seraphim approached the Holy One and requested: "Please, give us permission to harm him..."

At that moment a Bat Kol (Heavenly voice) went forth and said, "[One shall] not be like Korach and his company" (Numbers 17:5) – even though his sin is the same as theirs, his punishment shall not be the same!

At that moment, King Uzziah was stricken with *tzara'at* (leprosy), and he was expelled from Jerusalem to live within the confines of a cemetery, where he remained for twenty-five years, until the day of his death.

Isaiah's First Humbling Prophecy

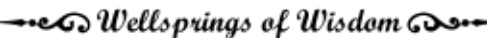
In that era when all of creation quaked following King Uzziah's deed, the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was in a completely different dimension. At that moment¹ he merited to shed his physicality and ascend to the upper worlds, and there he saw with his own eyes how all the heavenly hosts were trembling and roiling in reaction to Uzziah's act.

As it is said: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I beheld G-d seated on a high and lofty throne, and the skirts of His robe filled the Temple. Seraphim stood in attendance on Him... and one would call to the other and say... And the doorposts would shake at the sound of the one who called, and the House kept filling with smoke" (Isaiah 6:1-4).

In *Aryeh Sha'ag* (ibid., p. 119) it is written as follows: When Isaiah came to the upper worlds and saw "Seraphim standing

above Him... and one called to the other and said... and the doorposts would shake at the sound of the one who called" – seeing how the angels serve the L-rd of Hosts – Isaiah cried out and said: "*Woe is me, for I am silenced!* For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5).

"Woe is me, for I am silenced (*nidmeiti*)" – Woe to me that until now I had been living in delusions. Until now it seemed to me that I was a person of stature and importance, but now it has become clear that I have until now been living in a false fantasy and in error, and my service [of G-d] counts for nothing at all! And the reason I made this mistake is "for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips" – the environment around



1. As recorded in *Seder Olam Rabbah* (ch. 20) in the name of the holy Tanna, Rabbi Yosi ben Chalafta.

Parshat Tazria Metzora - When Error Leads to Truth

me caused all of these delusions!

Isaiah's cry subsided... and the Holy One, blessed be He, turned to him and said: "I am looking for someone who will agree to go and bring the people of Israel back to repentance."

Isaiah said to G-d: "Here I am—send me!" (Isaiah 6:8).

And from that moment he

began to prophesy. He merited to be among the greatest of the prophets, and most of his prophecies are prophecies of salvation and consolations awaiting the people of Israel.

We need to understand in this tale: Why specifically after Isaiah's heart was broken and crushed to pieces, did G-d approach him and appoint him as a prophet over the Jewish people?

When Error Leads to Truth

In the Gemara (Gittin 43a) it is related that on one occasion Rabbah bar Rav Huna issued a halachic ruling. Some time later, it became clear to him that he was mistaken, and he then gathered the sages and informed them of his mistake.

Before he announced his mistake, however, he opened with the verse: "*And this stumbling block is under your hand*" (Isaiah 3:6) — the Torah is called a stumbling block (*michsholah*) because a person does not truly grasp the truth of Torah words unless he has

stumbled over them — i.e., issued a mistaken ruling in them and was shamed for it. It is only then that he sets his heart to understand the matter properly. "I too have erred in my first ruling..." he admitted.

This too requires understanding: Why is it necessary to go through the stage of embarrassment before enlightenment in Torah study?

We will first answer the above questions that we posed, and then we will proceed to examine our weekly parasha.

The Chain of the Worlds

It arose in G-d's blessed will to create a world in which His Presence would be hidden and concealed, and to place within it human beings who would, on their own volition, crown Him as King over themselves.

To quote the *Ohev Yisrael* (beginning of Parashat Nitzavim):²

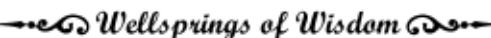
“When it arose in His sublime will, blessed and exalted be He, to emanate and create the worlds — the primary impetus and reason that compelled the creation of the worlds was only His primordial will to be adorned with the title of ‘King.’

All of the qualities and powers were then included in His Essence, blessed be He; however, the title of *King* applies only when there are subjects, for ‘there is no king without a people.’ For this reason, He emanated, created, formed and made all the worlds,

upper and lower, in order to become known and revealed as the sole King over the entire world in His glory, and for His kingship to rule over all.

However, the intensity of the revelation of His Kingship is an awe-inspiring intensity, and it was revealed and known before Him, blessed be He, that the limited creatures have no capacity to receive its pure unadulterated light — the light of the Infinite One, blessed be He.

Therefore, He contracted (*tzimtzem*) His light by many contractions, and shone His flow and vitality, and the brightness of His light, to each world according to what it could bear for its existence and for the need of its vitality and the maintenance of its system. And He created four general worlds, namely: Atzilut (Emanation), Beriah (Creation), Yetzirah (Formation), and Asiyah (Action).



2. Authored by the holy Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heshel—the “Ohev Yisrael” of Apta.

And in each and every world there are many levels (*madrigot*), one above the other...”

The Fragile Inner Self

The concept of a “level” (*madrigah*) appears frequently in the inner teachings of Torah, and we will explain it as it manifests in a person’s life. A *madrigah* is essentially a plane of a person’s inner world. The higher the level, the more refined and spiritual will be the expression of his emotions and his perception of the world around him, and the more he will be filled with faith.

Conversely, when a person’s inner world is low and full of material and coarse *acquisitiveness*, it is a sign that he is on a very low level, at the nether bottom of the lowest World of Asiyah.

To illustrate this idea, we bring an episode shared by Rabbi Yochanan Dovid Salomon (Migdal David – B’Ayin Yehudit, p. 161):

I once met my friend Yirmiyah as I was leaving the

synagogue. “I have to tell you what just happened to me during Mincha,” he said animatedly.

“At the end of the prayer I approached the chazan (prayer leader) to point out the distinction between the pronunciations of the various words in the prayer, because in the repetition of the Amidah, he erred in a few words.

I spoke to him politely: “Well done on the prayer! You pronounce the words nicely and clearly. But, please forgive me, I wanted to note that at the beginning of the Shemoneh Esrei, under the dalet in the second blessing, there is a cantillation stress mark, which indicates stress on the second-to-last syllable.”

To clarify, I held a siddur and pointed to the words in question. It seemed that he understood, and I continued: “Also, in another blessing there

is an emphasis that must be placed on the aleph.”

I lifted my gaze, and to my amazement, his face had turned beet red and his eyes were furiously angry. He burst out: “I said it all perfectly! You must not be hearing well. Your hearing is defective!” He drew breath and continued bellowing angrily, elaborating on my defects, but I didn’t hear the rest. I hastily retreated.”

“You got what you deserved,” I told my friend with a smile. “You violated the advice of the wisest of all men: ‘Do not rebuke a scoffer, lest he hate you’ (Proverbs 9:8).”

“I had his best interests in mind,” my friend apologized. “I wanted to teach him and enlighten him.”

“Yes,” I said, “but a letz (scoffer) doesn’t want to learn. He has no interest in you expanding his knowledge. He won’t change anything he’s been used to for fifty years; he will continue to do so for the next fifty.”

“Suppose you’re right,” he said, “but why did he have to insult me?”

“King Solomon already answered,” I explained. “The verse doesn’t say ‘do not teach a scoffer.’”

What you call teaching, the scoffer calls *tochacha*—rebuke. Any attempt to correct him implies that he is not okay as he is, and he takes it as an attack. He responds with full force. That scoffer of yours was in fact gentle and delicate if all he told you was that your hearing is faulty—being that your criticism strikes him at his very sense of self and being.”

“You’re exaggerating,” my friend said. “Is a small mistake in grammar really taken by him as an attack on his very being?”

“Herein lies the problem,” I answered. “In his eyes, his very essence encompasses everything connected to him—his appearance, behavior, opinions, and even his possessions. If someone at a red light tells him

Parshat Tazria Metzora - The Path of Constant Ascent

it's dangerous to straddle two lanes, he will react with fury, shouting crudely and dragging in derogatory family insults. His property too is part of his extended fragile self. Tell him his briefcase is imitation leather, and he will rage and insult your intelligence.

“Any remark regarding his body, behavior, property, or anything tied to him that implies a flaw is registered by him as an assault on his very existence. The one who made the remark unknowingly thereby became his enemy to the core, with all that implies, and the reaction will be accordingly...”

The Path of Constant Ascent

Clearly, the inner world of a *letz* is truly Hell, yet there is a strategy to extricate oneself from this level and to climb higher.

But in truth, it's not only the scoffer. The holy Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, in his *Tzetel Katan* (sec. 16), wrote: “Man was created in the world solely to break his natural tendencies! Therefore, let him spur himself to correct his character traits...”

As we have said, every person lives his life in his own unique inner world that is formed according to their nature and

traits, but he must not remain stuck there. Rather, he needs to break the nature he has acquired at that level and rise to the next level, and so on, again and again. Even the most exalted *tzaddikim* who have attained through their divine service lofty spiritual levels must not be satisfied with their level – with their own personal world; they are duty-bound to continue climbing onward to the next level.

Now we must understand how one is to ascend from level to level...

The Gift of a Broken Heart

The holy sages of the Zohar reveal to us (Zohar, Pinchas 240a)

that the way to break out of one's level and ascend to the higher

level is through a broken heart (*lev nishbar*), humility, and thoughts of repentance. This is the secret of the verse: “The sacrifices of G-d are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart...” (Psalms 51:19) – through a broken heart, the impure spirit of the *Sitra Achra* (the “Other Side,” realm of evil) that binds and fetters a person deep within his level is shattered.

To quote my father, Rabbi Yoram Abargel, of blessed memory (*Betzur Yarum*, vol. III, ch. 17):

“The way to break the *kelipot* (impure husks) is by breaking one’s heart to remove conceit, and by one’s soul grieving over his sins. As long as a person makes peace with his condition – makes peace with the reality that he is far from G-d – he is not in G-d’s inner circle; he is outside the partition.

This is what our Sages meant when they said that through sins a partition of iron is made, separating between him and his Father in Heaven. It is also that partition that causes him to reconcile himself with his state.

The way to tear down this partition is by breaking one’s heart and feeling bitterness in one’s soul over one’s sins. It is generally not good for a person to be broken [in spirit], but there is one kind of brokenness that is good, and that is a broken heart. When the heart is proud and feels powerful and strong – it is not a good thing; but when the heart is broken, that is the most whole kind of heart.

But this must be done in stages, progressing level by level. The right remedies must be prescribed to the right person; not every *tikkun* (remedy) is fit for every person.

Just as in the healing of the body, before a doctor gives a patient a treatment with pills, he warns him: if this pill causes you side effects, you must stop using it at once, come back to me and I will give you a different type of pill to continue the treatment – so too in healing the soul, not every *tikkun* is suited to every person. There is a *tikkun* that can have undue and unintended harm to him.

Therefore a person should not try to heal himself. For every matter there is someone who is an expert in that particular field. G-d created an eye specialist, a hearing specialist, an orthopedist, etc., and one must go specifically to that specialist for the problem he is an expert in. So too it is with a person's soul: one soul may have fallen ill from this

sin, another soul fell ill from another sin – to best solve the spiritual malaise and problems, consult a respected Torah sage.

But even before that, prior to the stage of consultation, one must first arrive at the recognition that he is stuck in place. And the best way to reach that recognition is by properly making a *cheshbon nefesh* (soul-accounting)..."

The Value of Cheshbon Nefesh

In our series called *Chelev Ha'aretz* (vol. II, ch. 7), we have written at great length about the proper way to do a soul-accounting.

The first requirement for undertaking a genuine *cheshbon nefesh* is composure and peace of mind. It is impossible to reach a revelation of the hidden recesses of the soul – for all one's mistakes and misdeeds to surface in his heart – if not in a state of true calmness of mind.

To attain a settled mind, one must set aside a time in which he

“disconnects” from all the vanities of the world – a time when he steps completely out of life's rat race and enters an inner layer of proper inner quietude. For this, it is very important to designate a special place in which to seclude oneself – for example, a place where no other people are present, or any other place where he can quickly reach a state of relaxation, tranquility, and calmness of soul.

In that state, he can carry out a thorough soul-accounting about everything that is happening with him. Only in such a way

Parshat Tazria Metzora - The Value of Cheshbon Nefesh

can a person truly uncover his deficiencies and missteps and correct them from the root and foundation, until he achieves their complete rectification.

Then, when he makes a *cheshbon nefesh* with himself, he will merit a revelation of all the hidden depths of his soul.³ That revelation will bring him to a full recognition of his flaws and bad traits – which are the root of all the sins and transgressions that form a

barrier and partition between a person and the Creator, as it is said: “Your sins have separated between you and your G-d” (Isaiah 59:2).

Through this, one will merit breaking out of his current level and ascending to a new and higher level, revealing the sweet light of G-d that flows within him. A true yearning will even be born in him to draw close to his Creator in earnest.

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

3. Rabbi Yishai Shaul Dvir once related (Ein Od Milvado II, p. 350):

David was sitting on the ramp with the Suez Canal at his feet. The date was Yom Kippur 5734 (1973), but this day meant little to him at the time. Suddenly, a squadron of Egyptian enemy aircraft crossed the canal in a low sweep. David crouched behind the machine gun and fired at them. He did not hit, of course, but was at that moment marked as hostile by the enemy forces. His communication net was jammed, and an Egyptian company opened fire on him.

He rushed to the APC military vehicle and roused the driver. Together they tried to retreat along the road parallel to the canal, the Lexicon Route, but found it to be under

fire as well. Cutting across the “Chinese Farm,” they ran into Sudanese commandos and survived a face-to-face battle.

When they reached their outpost, they found Egyptian commandos already on the surrounding fences. The two joined their company in a brief, close-quarters fight on the outpost’s perimeter. The Egyptian attack was repelled, but not without wounded and fallen among their men. As the unit regrouped, the commander told them quite bluntly: “This is an all-out war.”

Later in the war, as the Israeli forces repelled the attack and crossed to the Egyptian side of the canal, a shell struck the APC directly ahead of them, killing all who were inside. To his right, a tank

Parshat Tazria Metzora - The Value of Cheshbon Nefesh

was hit in its turret, lifted into the air, and crashed down onto its own hatch. For the first time in his life, David found himself speaking with the Creator—pleading and trembling: *“If I leave here alive, I will do whatever You ask of me.”*

The Creator kept, His part; David, however, forgot his...

When he was discharged, he and his brothers decided to build a family business. The state encouraged new factories in the Negev, promising to match private funding with grants and loans. David traveled to Canada and Italy, studying gold-jewelry production—mixing alloys, drawing wires, weaving and polishing them. Together they purchased machines for gold-chain manufacturing, employed dozens of workers, produced jewelry, and sold it profitably.

In time, they heard of generous incentives in South Africa, on condition that they take in a local partner. They transferred their machines there and prospered, until their South African partner deceived them. Two of the brothers remained in South Africa—one becoming a professor of economics, the other active in the stock exchange—while David returned to Israel with his wife and two daughters. His promise to G-d during the Yom Kippur War still lay waiting to be fulfilled.

Back in Israel, they bought a small cleaning-materials plant and, with joint effort, grew it into a large enterprise.

From a turnover of 20,000 shekels a month, it swelled to 900,000. They operated a fleet of trucks, bought and processed raw materials, and packed and distributed merchandise—mainly to the Arab sector. The workload was back-breaking, endless, day and night.

One evening, exhausted on the highway home, they found themselves stuck in a massive traffic jam. Locked in the metal box, they began to a soul-search. The business was turning millions, but they were crushed by the ten years of endless labor. Each morning they trekked to the factory, put in fourteen hours of toil, then they headed home to sleep, and again the same.

Their three daughters barely experienced a normal home life: the eldest in eighth grade, the middle in sixth, and the youngest in daycare. A maid cleaned, a caterer supplied food. This was not the life they had wanted. They decided, there in the car, to sell the factory so David could pursue studies, and seek a different, more yielding profession.

His eyes lit up. He had long dreamed of studying natural medicine. Now he could finally fulfill his dream. His wife encouraged him warmly. They sold the plant and lived off the proceeds while David studied.

Over four intense years, he studied naturopathy, acupuncture, reflexology, iridology, Bach flower remedies, and earned a doctorate in nutrition. He

Parshat Tazria Metzora - The Value of Cheshbon Nefesh

authored books, invented healing formulas, and drew up an iridology chart. Using his knowledge and skills, he helped many overcome illness.

At last David was content—free from the endless grind of chasing money, now working with meaning and helping others, bringing hope and relief.

Yet still, the vow to G-d was suppressed and forgotten.

His wife, however, found new joy. At last she was able to be at home and in the kitchen. She had no idea how to cook—so she turned to a Moroccan friend, a religious woman, who offered to teach her.

She taught her several kinds of salads: sour, sweet, spicy—beets, okra, carrots, potatoes. She taught her to cook several variations and dishes of fish and meat, and several kinds of desserts, pies and cakes.

The friend explained, “On Shabbat—there is an extra soul, and it is most fitting to honor it with many delectable dishes.”

However, it remained a mystery to her: what exactly is Shabbat?

She returned with a notebook full of recipes, but had no Shabbat to prepare for. One night, unable to sleep, she tuned the radio and found a program quoting Jewish sources. It was interesting, challenging. At the end of the program, the announcer mentioned: “If you have questions about Judaism, there is an organization called Arachim that you could turn to.”

She wrote down the number and called. A registrar visited their home, heard that her husband was a nutritionist, and recommended that they attend the “Seminar for academics.”

“What do they do there?” she asked.

“They recharge the ‘extra soul,’” he replied.

The answer impressed her. When David returned, she told him about the seminar.

Unknowingly, he started upon the path of fulfilling his Yom Kippur war vow and agreed to register for the seminar.

They both attended the seminar, but it most strongly influenced her. She listened intently, absorbed everything, and at the symposium she accepted to take upon herself Shabbat observance. Returning home, she bought candlesticks and a Shabbat urn, recruited her religious friend, and prepared the several kinds of salads that she had been taught.

David, who hadn’t been entirely persuaded by the seminar, chuckled at the sight of the candles. He made Kiddush, they ate the shabbat meal—but then he turned on the television.

She was very disheartened. She took a Tehillim to the bedroom and wept: “Master of the world, please help me. We were taught in the seminar that if a Jew does his part, G-d assists him and meets him halfway. I badly want a home that keeps Shabbat !”

The Power of a Broken Heart

Up to this point, it has been explained that a fundamental principle in the service of G-d is to regularly conduct a *cheshbon nefesh*. Through this, one attains a humble, broken heart and true thoughts of repentance. In turn, this allows him to break out of his current level and ascend to a higher level – a level illuminated by an even greater divine revelation.

With this one basic principle, all three of the questions that

we raised earlier in our discussion can be answered:

The Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to grant Isaiah the level of prophecy – but for that, Isaiah needed to leave and rise above his prior level. Therefore G-d brought him up to heaven and showed him the service of the angels and seraphim. When Isaiah saw the greatness of their service, his heart shattered, and he cried out, “Woe is me!” It was then, by virtue of his

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

The next day she resolved to begin changing her life to Torah observance, beginning with her youngest—enrolling her little one in a religious kindergarten. The middle daughter soon followed, and with her mother’s help in her studies, she was integrated well. At first the eldest resisted, but the mother made it clear: their home was changing. If she wished, she could join them; if not, at least she would be expected to respect it. And surely enough, with time, she too adapted, enrolling in a religious college, and in fact, today she teaches others.

As David watched the transformation of his home it suddenly dawned upon him: more than thirty years earlier he had made a vow to G-d! Although he

had ignored the hints, G-d had now enlisted his wife to ‘collect the debt.’

She advanced step by step: covering her hair when she prayed and lit candles; once even wearing his embroidered kippah to a job interview unwittingly, where it was taken as a fashion accessory. From there, she grew accustomed to covering her hair fully. Relatives followed her lead; she organized home study groups and seminars.

Today she manages the southern region of Arachim’s academic division. She does public speaking, teaches, and even hosts guests for Shabbat—always serving several kinds of salads, all in honor of the ‘extra soul’ of Shabbat.

Parshat Tazria Metzora - Life Conceived Through Affliction

humbled and broken heart, that he merited breaking out of his previous level and receiving the next, higher level.

The same was true for the Ohev Yisrael of Apta, who was humbled and abased in his early travels, and later had a meteoric spiritual rise.

And likewise, it is true with one who studies Torah:

at first his mind may be “programmed” to a certain mode of understanding, but it is when he stumbles in matters of Torah and his heart is humbled before G-d that he merits to attain a new and deeper and more meaningful level in Torah study.

Now, let us move on to discuss our weekly parasha.

Life Conceived Through Affliction

In a talk delivered by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, he noted the following:⁴ In common years (which do not have a second month of Adar), the Torah portions *Tazria* and *Metzora* are joined together. This hints at the close connection and relevance between these two

portions. In both *parshiyot* the subject that is elaborated upon is *nega'im* (plague-spots or afflictions of *tzara'at*), in Parashat *Tazria* – the afflictions that affect a person and garments, and in Parashat *Metzora* – the afflictions that affect houses.⁵

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

4. *Likkutei Sichot* (vol. 22, p. 70).

5. Rabbeinu Bachya explains (*Vayikra* 14:37): Ten afflictions are mentioned here: six upon a person’s body—*se’eit*, *sapachat*, *baheret*, *shechin*, *netek*, and baldness—and four outside of his body: in a woolen garment, in a linen garment, in any leather article, and in the walls of a house.

The passages of the Torah are arranged in precisely this order, with these ten afflictions corresponding to the Ten Commandments; when the Jewish people fulfilled the Torah and its commandments in the Land of Israel, they were spared from these afflictions, but if not, they were struck and afflicted with them...”

Parshat Tazria Metzora - Adam and the Mystery of Tzara'at

Furthermore, Parashat Metzora is the conclusion and culmination of Parashat Tazria, for the laws of the *metzora* (leper) discussed in Parashat Tazria find their conclusion – “This shall be the law of the *metzora* on the day of his purification” (Leviticus 14:2) – in Parashat Metzora.

All told, in the two portions there are 124 verses, divided as follows: the first eight verses at the beginning of Parashat Tazria deal with the laws of a woman who gives birth to a male or female. After that, the Torah lays out all the laws of the various *tzara'at* afflictions and their purification in the remaining over one hundred verses – 59 verses of Parashat Tazria, and the other 57 verses of Parashat Metzora.

Now, one who contemplates these two portions is faced with a question:

The first parasha is named Tazria (“shall conceive”), but the great majority of that parasha

deals with the subject of *nega'im* (*tzara'at* afflictions), not the laws of the impurity following birth (which is discussed in a few short verses in the beginning of the portion).

What’s even more perplexing is that the word *tazria* has no relation to the subject of *nega'im*, and in fact seems to represent the very opposite: *Tazria* implies – as it says in our parasha, “A woman who conceives and gives birth...” (Leviticus 12:2) – something that brings new life and vitality into the world; whereas *nega'im*, by contrast, represent death. As our Sages say, “a *metzora* (leper) is considered like a dead person” (Nedarim 64b). In other words, the *tum'ah* (impurity) of the *metzora*, and furthermore, the *metzora* himself is considered as dead!

How then can we give a name that signifies new life to the parasha that presents us with the phenomenon of death and cessation?!

Adam and the Mystery of Tzara'at

In a talk delivered by my father, Rabbi Yoram

Abargel, of blessed memory (*Imrei Noam*, Tazria – Ma’amar 1),

he asked the following question:

In the Holy Tongue of the Torah, the human being is referred to by four different terms: *Adam*, *Ish*, *Gever*, and *Enosh*.

The highest of these terms is “Adam,” and it is used only for people of great spiritual stature.

When we examine our parasha, we notice that throughout the parasha, only the term Adam is used!

Tzara'at — A Ladder of Ascent

In the first question we raised, we made the faulty assumption that *tzara'at* is a phenomenon that is related merely to death and extinction. Therefore, we wondered why the parasha has the name Tazria, whose theme is new birth and life.

But in truth, the premise is mistaken. It is true that at the moment a person's body is covered in *tzara'at*, he is considered as one who is dead. However, the outcome that

But we must understand why the entire section of *nega'im*, which ostensibly concerns people of a lesser level, who have been stricken with leprosy uses specifically the term “Adam”: “*Adam*, if there will be in the skin of his flesh a *se'et* (white swelling)...” (Leviticus 13:2); “A *tzara'at* affliction, if it will be in an *Adam*...” (Leviticus 13:9).

Sure enough, the answer to both this question and the previous one we raised is one and the same...

results from the *tzara'at* is an outcome of new life.

The very essence of *tzara'at* is telling a person: recalculate your route. You were on a good path, and you veered off; now see how you can return to the right road. Make an honest *cheshbon nefesh* with yourself; reach a state of broken heart, humility, and stirrings of *teshuvah*, and then you will merit the ultimate purpose of *tzara'at*. And the ultimate

purpose and objective of *tzara'at* is the hope of healing – the renewal of the *metzora*, his corrected and reborn self. Now, since the main point of the affliction is the ultimate result, it is thus most fitting to give the title “Tazria” (which is related to new life) to the section of Torah that discusses *nega'im*.

Now we can also understand why throughout the section of *nega'im* the term used is *Adam*, which denotes people of high spiritual caliber, for it is specifically those individuals with higher souls who are afflicted with leprosy to arouse them to even higher heights by first experiencing a broken heart and spirit, which leads to a new birth and spiritual renewal.

A lowly Jewish soul who is trapped in a limited and constricted level, where raging impulses rule over him: anger, jealousy, sadness, depression, anxiety, and dread – it's no wonder that he would yearn to escape his level. It's no surprise

that he cries out to the Al-mighty to break him free from his lowly state...

It is rather a person of a high spiritual level, whose life is full of spiritual lights and delights, who needs an awakening call.

When he lays *tefillin* he feels the fire of spirituality igniting within his heart; a spiritual intoxication envelops him... Thus the question is regarding such a person. Will he ever merit to recognize his limitations with a broken heart and humility? Will he ever come to desire and yearn to leave his current level and continue to ascend ever upward?

Therefore, in order to rouse him, G-d sends him various events that cause all the lofty lights to be shut off from him – and this brings him to a broken heart. Thus, it is specifically *Adam* – a person of stature – who needs these “reminders.”

May it be G-d's will that we merit to ascend from level to level each and every day, Amen!

Summary and Practical Conclusions

1 The purpose of man's creation is to constantly ascend; never to remain on the same level. Rather, one must break free of the nature he has acquired at his current level and climb up to the next level. Even the most exalted *tzaddikim* who attained spiritual greatness through their divine service must not be content with their personal level; they are obligated to keep on climbing further to the next level.

2 The way for a person to break out of his current level and rise to the next level is by means of a broken heart, humility, and thoughts of repentance. There is nothing stronger than humility and a broken heart. Through it, the impure "Other side" that binds and limits a person to his level is shattered.

3 By contrast, as long as a person makes peace with his current state – resigning himself to the reality that he is distant from G-d – a partition of iron is created, separating between him and his Father in Heaven, and it causes a person to come to terms with his condition. The way to tear down this partition is through a broken heart and bitterness over one's sins – and this is achieved by conducting a genuine *cheshbon nefesh*.

4 To be sure, pain, sadness, and moroseness are not the proper path of serving G-d; on the contrary, a person should flee from them as much as possible. There is, however, one thing that does benefit a person, and that is having a broken heart. A broken heart is most laudable; in fact, the most whole heart is one that is broken.

5 This, however, must be done gradually, step by step, level after level. If a person hastily crushes himself, he will not attain his own rectification; acts of self-mortification are most likely not appropriate for a person. Rather, a person must seek out a rabbi or some other spiritual mentor who understands the healing of the soul. Only such a guide can help him, lift him out of his current state, and raise him up level after level.

6 The first condition for making a *cheshbon nefesh* is having peace of mind and calmness of the soul. It is not possible to bring to light the hidden depths of one's soul – to have all one's errors and wrongs come to heart – without true composure of mind. To attain a settled mind, one must set a time to "disconnect" from all worldly vanities – a time to leave the bustle of life completely and

Parshat Tazria Metzora - Summary and Practical Conclusions

enter an inner state of quietude. Likewise, one should designate a secluded place, and there, to conduct a thorough *cheshbon nefesh* about all that is occurring in his life.

7 When a person conducts a proper *cheshbon nefesh* with himself, he will merit a revelation of the hidden depths of his soul. That revelation will further bring him to a full recognition of his deficiencies and bad traits, which are the root of all the sins and misdeeds that form a barrier between a person and the Creator, blessed be He.

He will then find the strength to break out of his level and to ascend

to an even higher level, to reveal the sweet light of G-d that flows within him. As a result, he will also experience a genuine yearning to draw close to G-d.

8 It must be remembered that the greater and higher a person is, the more he needs to attain a broken heart in order to break out of his present level and to ascend to higher levels. It is precisely such people who face the more difficult tests that bring them to a state of broken heart – and *from* that narrow strait to go onward to the next level in serving G-d, achieving an even greater wholeness.

Shabbat Shalom!





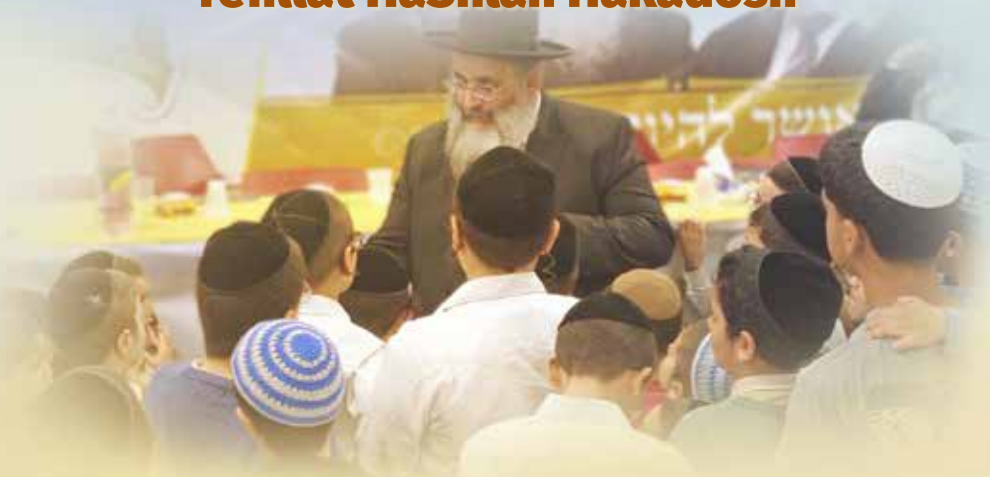
B"sd



*Hold their name in prayer
Rare and sacred*

The Blessing of the Sons

**The Shlah's Prayer for Children
Tefillat HaShlah Hakadosh**



Prayer rooted in generations, spoken with care and intention, held
for our children, their wellbeing, their path, their growth.


Rabbi Yisrael Abergel shlit"a

Son of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abergel zt"l**

Will pray for your children

on the eve of Rosh Chodesh Sivan

**Add names
for prayer**

 **+1(347)352-8125**



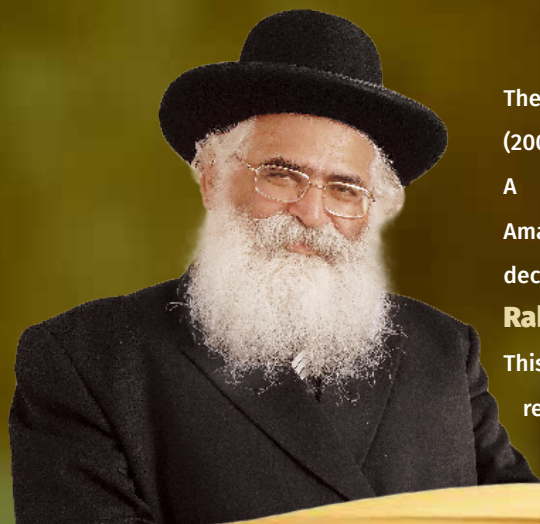
New

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



New!

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

New and rare books from his teachings have been published:



❧ Beshir Yarum ❧

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

❧ Yarum Meshalo ❧

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



❧ Shufrei DeYosef ❧

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



Hurry to order: 08-931-1785

shop.hameir-laarets.org.il

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



New!

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

New and rare books from his teachings have been published:



Imrei Noam

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

Hameir L'Yisrael

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



Betzur Yarum

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



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

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



Distribution free of charge
publication Requires Genizah

T*01

Shabbat Times Tazria-Metzora

1st of Iyar ,5786



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	7:19 pm	8:21 pm	8:51 pm
Miami	7:27 pm	8:21 pm	8:58 pm
Los Angeles	7:09 pm	8:06 pm	8:39 pm
Montreal	7:25 pm	8:32 pm	8:57 pm
Toronto	7:45 pm	8:50 pm	9:17 pm
London	7:42 pm	8:56 pm	9:14 pm
Jerusalem	6:54 pm	7:45 pm	8:34 pm
Tel Aviv	6:51 pm	7:43 pm	8:31 pm
Haifa	6:51 pm	7:46 pm	8:34 pm
Be'er Sheva	6:50 pm	7:44 pm	20:32 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

We need to realize that this generation is waiting, with longing eyes, to see us as parents who lead—parents who educate.

A child doesn't have to attend a "Talmud Torah" school in order to be properly raised; he must grow up in a home where there is proper chinuch. Where he never hears his father utter an unnecessary word—G-d forbid—let alone his mother.

When he always sees his father dignified, and his mother dignified in the fullest sense; when such a child grows up, he will say: "I grew up in a home like that—so that is how I, too, will raise my children."



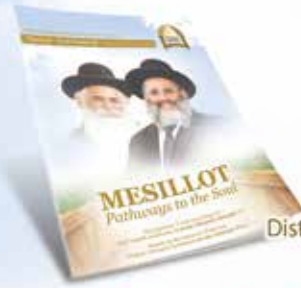
Become a Partner!

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:

