

INTRODUCTION



My goal is to entertain you in a way that will benefit you greatly. Benefit and entertainment are rarely together, and this is a rare book

This book will most resonate with and benefit a clear thinker who is committed to employing the mind and soul, while withstanding the pull of passions, emotions, and outside influences that have no concern for our well-being. For this clear thinker, this book will shine a light on truth and illuminate the purpose of existence.

To highlight the significance of every word, each rhyming stanza follows a precise structure—every line rhymes, and contains the same number of words as the other lines in its grouping.

My contribution to these ideas is firsthand, shaped by both experience and study. I explored the foolish path in depth and came to wisdom through intuitive contrast and sincere pursuit. This is no cause for honor — only deep gratitude to God for allowing me to find truth, even after straying so far from it.

I have been in the pits of the Big Apple, and I traveled to the heights of the Holy Land. Through this book, I will take you on a fun journey to the soul of these two worlds.

I will present practical wisdom from trustworthy sources. I hope that the combination of my first-hand knowledge, supporting timeless and proven wisdom, and the fact that we have a natural feel for the truth will together form a knot that is not easily undone by our inner foe.

The notes provide a taste of the relevant sources of information that substantiate or supplement the ideas. Looking into these notes and the accompanying sources will open additional doors to a profoundly meaningful journey.

Let's proceed more lightly.
 Let's explore our fallibility
 Let's observe society's absurdity,
 Through our cultural malleability
 And our practical philosophy:

When jeans rip, they should be thrown to waste.
 In fashion circles, it's become a sign of taste.

Throwing a ball around is best reserved for children,
 But ball-throwing adults are looked upon with total adoration.

We pay ball-throwers far more than our teachers.
 One thing's for sure—we need better preachers.

JOE

What's wrong with our intuitive moral understanding?

YOSEF

Our opinions should fit the King's ruling,
 Otherwise, erratic whims control our fleeting feelings
 And what's right will always be changing.
 Truth is God's sign, and it's everlasting.⁴⁴

JOE

That's the advantage of the revelation narration
 For founding a religious belief or regulation:
 It's to give dogmas that lofty validation,
 It helps to eliminate any potential opposition,
 It's a quick detour around any question,

YOSEF

God's all encompassing coronation is for universal incorporation,
Making it harder to believe a private revelation,⁴⁵
That doesn't seem to be the best option,
I would presume it would need equal confirmation,
Especially if it contradicts a nationally witnessed tradition.

JOE

Private revelations confer undue power without reason;
Demanding belief without proof or rational recognition.

YOSEF

Right— try researching religious texts using objective and reasonable investigation.
You will find that Torah qualifies as verifiable divine information.

It's the normal patterns that draw conclusions,
Not the anomalies and one time exceptions.
It's logical to presume from causal repetition.
Using patterns throughout generations to draw conclusions.

Let me provide you with such a progression,
One that you won't find in another religion.
Here you'll find confirmation that's derived from replication.

From Moshe and the splitting of the sea,⁴⁶
To Yehoshua and the walls of Jericho city;⁴⁷

From David slaying the unconquerable giant,⁴⁸
To Eliyahu leaving all deniers silent;⁴⁹

From Daniel being saved from the hungry lion's cage,⁵⁰
To his companions being unscathed by the fire's rage;⁵¹

From the few Chashmonaim defeating an unconquerable Greek army.⁵²
To the Persian Empire and the amazing Purim story.⁵³
Proving that the Jewish nation is tied to eternity.

From the perpetuity of Jewish history,
To the individuals who defied reality—
The validity of the Torah's divinity
Has been shown empirically and historically.

God's covenant with the Jewish nation
Has been proven in every generation.

The Torah forges this connection,
There's no denying that correlation.

JOE

Why isn't it sufficient to make a humanitarian contribution
Without being trapped inside the confines of this religion?

YOSEF

Because the greatest acquisition of your charitable donation
Is not the warm and fuzzy fleeting sensation.
Rather, it's closeness to the God of creation
Through overcoming your tendencies, becoming a better person,
You mold yourself into an eternally new creation.

If your benevolence is limited to personality and feeling,
Then you are not becoming your most elevated being.

Innate kindness is an extension of your natural predisposition,
Not an independent acquisition that you earned through exertion.
This kindness fades when faced with a personal aversion.

YOSEF

Those traits are necessary for sanctification.
Everything depends on your character perfection.¹⁵⁵
Like everything, there is a foundation,
Humility is foundational for Torah acquisition,¹⁵⁶
The humble have the closest connection.

JOE

What should I do to start getting my mind on track?
How do I get the time and purity I lost back?

YOSEF

Books of wisdom will guide you in the right direction,
Books that refresh your mind with pure, divinely inspired information.

Some essential books of this type are called sefarim:
Mishlei, Kohelet, Orchot Tzadikim, Chovot HaLevavot, and Mesilat Yesharim.

JOE

I am not a man of the publication,
I think I need some more motivation.

YOSEF

If the wisest man wrote a book of wisdom, who would forgo this opportunity?
Mishlei and Kohelet are the teachings of King Solomon, the wisest man throughout humanity.

On top of his wisdom, Solomon was nobility.
He had the resources to indulge his curiosity.

In addition to the books of wisdom for your study,
You must also be a student of life and history.
If you like experimenting, start with facts, true since antiquity.

Search the annals of cultures and history.
Don't repeat mistakes that always produce misery.
Authenticity, honesty, and humility make you happy.

There's a connection between being holy and happy,
As there is between impurity and feeling guilty.
People who do wrong are more often gloomy.

There is a connection between being holy and having satisfaction.
That's God's way of guiding us in the right direction.

JOE

What should I do to counter all the influences out there?
I feel like the challenges are too strong to be fair.

YOSEF

Study what the Sages have taught us,
Disregard what the movies have shown us.

Our Sages are the real deal,
Not actors on a movie reel.

Divorces are far more uncommon among those who heed the sages' instruction.
We can't say that for romances in the real world, off television.

Always remember that in addition to the wisdom and purity of our Sages, they are our family.
Like those who stood at the revelation at Sinai, these people are our ancestors — that fosters transparency.