

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Beha'aloscha



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Torah Wellsprings - Beha'aloscha

A Yid Is Complete Only When Connected with Hashem

It states in the parsha (10:2) עֲשֵׂה לְךָ שְׁתֵּי חֲצוֹצְרוֹת בְּכֶסֶף, "Make for yourself two silver trumpets..."

The Magid of Mezritch zt'l said that חֲצוֹצְרוֹת hints to two words: חֲצִי צוּרָה, half an image, which refers to the Jewish nation and Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Klal Yisrael are only half and become complete when they unite with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The Magid compares it to a father and son. Both love each other and are like one body. But when they aren't united, they are like two halves of one whole.

The Magid's lesson is very deep, and he elaborates on the depths of his words. However, אזור אליהו (Reb Eliyahu Lerman zt'l, Rav of Viscott, a student of the Kotzker zt'l) explains the Magid's lesson in a manner that everyone can relate to. Saying that a Yid is half without Hashem essentially means that a person can't do anything without Hashem. And, in contrast, when Hashem is with him, he can do everything.

He writes that when a person believes this, it is a complete חֲצוֹצְרוֹת and is a very high level.

Therefore, it states עֲשֵׂה לְךָ שְׁתֵּי חֲצוֹצְרוֹת, a person must know that he is a חֲצִי צוּרָה, a half, and that he can't do anything alone, without Hashem. He needs Hakadosh Baruch Hu to send him siyata d'Shmayah. As it states (Tehillim 138:8) ה' יְגַמֵּר בְּעַדִּי ה' חֲסִדְךָ לְעוֹלָם מִעֲשֵׂי יְדִיךָ אֵל תִּתְּנֵהוּ, "May Hashem complete on my behalf; Hashem Your kindness is eternal, do not let go of the creatures of Your hand." We are requesting that Hashem should יְגַמֵּר, complete everything we seek to do, because a person cannot manage on his own. We also request

אַל תִּתְּנֵהוּ, that even for a moment, Hashem shouldn't let go of us, because we can't manage for a second without Hashem's help.

This concept is also relevant when it comes to parnassah. A person does his hishtadlus, but he must know that he won't succeed without Hashem. He is only half, and without Hashem, he can't do anything.

When a person knows that he can't earn parnassah without Hashem, he will stop rushing all the time to earn a living. He has time for Torah and tefillah because he knows that if it is destined from Heaven, it will occur, and if it isn't bashert, all the rushing in the world won't help him.

The Gemara (Shabbos 113b) states, "A large step causes a person to lose 1/500 of his eyesight. His eyesight is returned to him during kiddush on Friday night." The אזור אליהו explains that "he loses his eyesight" means that he lost the eyesight of the intellect. Why was he rushing? Why was he taking large strides? If it was because he thought that if he doesn't rush, he won't have parnassah, and he won't succeed, then he doesn't see things correctly. Parnassah is from Hashem, and no one can take away what is due to him. The same is true with all his needs. There is no reason to rush. If it is bashert, he will get them, without rushing. Friday night, when he makes kiddush, the eyesight of his intellect returns. This is because when he recites kiddush, he remembers that everything is from Hashem, and therefore, at that time, he begins to think straight again. He receives the correct and true eyesight of the intellect, to know that everything is from Hashem, and we can't do anything by ourselves.¹

1. We sing in the Shabbos zemiros, פּוֹסְעִים בּו פְּסִיעָה קְטָנָה, "We walk on Shabbos with short strides." Based on our lesson, one takes small steps on Shabbos because on Shabbos, when his emunah increases, he realizes

The *mann* brought with it lessons in emunah, to believe that Hashem supports us. Many miracles happened with the *mann*, showing to all that parnassah is from heaven. Therefore, about the *mann*, it states in this week's parashah (11:7) וְהָפֶן כְּזֶרַע גַּד הוּא וְעֵינָיו כְּעֵיִן הַבְּדֹלַח. The literal translation is, "The *mann* was like coriander seed and its color was like the color of the *bedolach*." But the *אזור אליהו* explains that וְעֵינָיו כְּעֵיִן hints to the eyes of the intellect that were amended with the *mann*. The *mann* taught the Yidden the emunah that parnassah is from Hashem, which fixed the eyes of the intellect.

When the *mann* fell to this world, it passed through Gan Eden, and therefore, had a scent from Gan Eden. Another wonder of the *mann* was that whatever a person thought of when he ate it, he was able to taste in the *mann*. However, the *אזור אליהו* writes that these two benefits – the scent of Gan Eden in the *mann*, and that it tasted like all foods – were only for the people who had bitachon. Some people worked hard collecting the *mann* and preparing it. Their

bitachon wasn't perfect, and they lacked these two benefits. As it states (11:8) שָׂטוּ הָעָם וְלָקְטוּ וְטָחְנוּ בְּרַחֲמִים אוֹ דָבָר בְּמִדְבָּרָה וּבְשָׂלוֹ בְּפָרוֹר וַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ עֲגוֹת וְהָיָה טַעְמוֹ כְּטַעַם לֶשֶׁד הַשָּׂמֶן, "The people would stroll and gather it, and grind it in a mill or pound it in a mortar and cook it in a pot or make it into cakes, and it tasted like the taste of dough kneaded with oil." The Zohar explains that שָׂטוּ means they acted with foolishness (from the word שטות), because they worked hard to grind it and to prepare it. They didn't have bitachon that Hashem would give them a perfectly prepared food. For them, the taste of the *mann* was as it states, וְהָיָה טַעְמוֹ כְּטַעַם לֶשֶׁד הַשָּׂמֶן, "it tasted like the taste of dough kneaded with oil".

Towards the end of the parashah, one of the praises Hashem says about Moshe is (12:8) תְּמוֹנֶת ה' יֵבִיט, "At the image of Hashem does he gaze." The Lev Simchah of Gur zt'l says that these words have a hinted message, which is applicable to every person. The pasuk is telling us that wherever a person looks, he should see Hashem. He shouldn't look at the world and think it is nature.

that Hashem provides parnassah, so there is no reason to rush. He will receive whatever is coming to him, so why rush?

The Alshich writes on the words שָׂטוּ הָעָם וְלָקְטוּ, "The fools gathered and collected...". He writes that their foolishness was וְלָקְטוּ, that they gathered the *mann*. They didn't understand that regardless, they will receive what is destined for them, so why should they exert themselves to gather it? Why should they even bend down to pick up the *mann*?

A certain Yid worked as a street cleaner. One day, he announced to his family with immense joy, "Last night, I dreamt that I am extremely wealthy, in the likes of Baron Rothschild!"

His family rejoiced. They trusted that the good tidings the foretold would come to be. His wife clapped her hands together in joy, and said, "Now we will be able to pay off all our debts. I will pay what we owe the butcher, and we can start paying back what we owe the neighbors..."

Her husband was insulted when he heard this. He retorted to his wife, "Did I not make myself sufficiently clear? I dreamt that I would be wealthier than Rothschild. We will pay off *all* our debts, and we will still be able to keep the entire income I earn from street cleaning." This foolish man didn't realize that once he is wealthier than Rothschild, his measly income from street cleaning will mean nothing whatsoever, compared to his great riches.

We tell this mashal to those who feel compelled to "help" Hashem. They believe that Hashem provides parnassah, but they want to augment the parnassah, to increase it, so they do more. Let them realize that when Hashem is helping, the person's "help" is superfluous. Hashem gives us all our needs, and the little we add on our own – or more accurately, what we think we add on – is totally insignificant, in comparison to the immense wealth Hashem gives us.

On the pasuk (8:2) *בְּהִעָלְתֶךָ אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת*, "When you kindle the lamps," the Midrash (15:7) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, your eyes have white and black in them, but you don't see through the white. You only see through the black..." Tzaddikim (Sifsei Tzaddik) learn from this the following lesson: There are times when everything is bright (like the white of the eyes). These are the times when everything is going well, and Hashem shines His light on him. He has parnassah, health, nachas; nothing major is lacking in his life. Also, his avodas Hashem is going quite well. Everything is going well for him – b'ruchniyus and b'gashmiyus. In contrast, there are times when a person feels that his life is dark (like the black dot in his eyes). He suffers from poverty, health issues, etc., and because of this his avodas Hashem is much harder to perform. People think that the bright moments of life are the best moments of life. The dark, black moments of life, when everything is hard, and avodas Hashem is a great struggle – feel like the unproductive time in his life. Actually, the opposite is true. The best moments are the challenging ones. That is when one rises the most. That is when one has the potential to make a great nachas ruach for Hashem.

Therefore, the Midrash teaches that you only see from the black of your eyes, an indication that from the hard times you can merit seeing Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Don't think that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants solely the bright, good times. As the Midrash there states, *הַקָּב"ה שְׂכֹלוֹ אֹרֵחַ אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ לְאֹרֵחַ שְׁלָכֶם*, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who is entirely light, He doesn't need your light."² It is specifically the challenges that we go through that are the purpose of our existence.

It states (11:4) *וְהָאֶסְפָּסָף אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבּוֹ הִתְאַוּוּ תְּאַנּוּהָ* וְיָשְׁבוּ וַיִּבְכוּ גַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִי יֵאֲכִלֵנוּ בְּשָׂר׃ "The rabble that was among them cultivated a

craving, and Bnei Yisrael also wept once more and said, 'Who will feed us meat?'"

כ"ק אַדְמו"ר, my father zy'a asked four questions on this pasuk:

1) What is the meaning of the double expression *הִתְאַוּוּ תְּאַנּוּהָ*?

2) It states *וַיִּבְכוּ גַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*, "Bnei Yisrael also wept." It seems it should have stated, *וַיִּבְכוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*, "Bnei Yisrael wept." The word *גַּם*, also, indicates that others cried, aside from Bnei Yisrael.

3) It is known that when the pasuk states *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*, Klal Yisrael are on a high level. When it states *הָעַם*, they are on a low level. (The source for this is the Zohar, vol.3, p.210b). So, why does it state *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* here, when they were crying and complaining that they wanted to eat meat?

4) The greatest question here is how could this exalted holy nation desire meat? In the desert, the staple was mann – a holy food, the food malachim eat (see Yoma 75b). The mann should have sanctified them, until they don't want gashmiyus. The early sefarim write that all temptations come from eating food. Food draws people into gashmiyus and to desire temptations. But since they were eating mann, they shouldn't have any temptation for meat at all!

My father answered that there were two types of crying happening at this time. There were the cries of the *אֶסְפָּסָף*, and there were the cries of *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*. They were both crying, but the tears weren't at all similar.

The explanation is that the Gemara (Sotah 3b) states that when a person performs an aveirah in this world, the aveirah wraps around him and "he is tied to it like a dog." When he goes up to heaven for judgment,

2. The literal meaning of the Midrash is to correct the mistake of those who think that the purpose of the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash was to provide light to Hashem. The Midrash brings several proofs that Hashem doesn't need our light. We light the menorah for the mitzvah, and not because Hashem needs light, chalilah.

the aveirah that is tied to him comes along with him.

The Baalei Mussar explain that this refers to taavos, as well. When a person has taavos in this world, they remain with him even after he dies. The taavah that he immersed himself in, in this world, wraps around the person and is tied to him like a dog, and goes up with him to heaven. Only in the next world, although he has temptation, he can't act upon those taavos. This is actually a great suffering for the baalei taavah in Olam HaBa. They want to enjoy the taavos they are familiar with in Olam Hazeh, but they aren't able to take them.³

This describes what happened with the אֲסִפְסָפָה. They were accustomed to aveiros, and to temptations, and they couldn't depart from them. They ate the mann, and this holy food prevented them from actually performing aveiros, but the taavos of their past remained within them. They can be compared to people who are in the grave. They aren't able to take their taavos, but this doesn't mean that they don't want them. They are tied and wrapped in their taavos.

Therefore, it states וְהָאֲסִפְסָפָה אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבּוֹ הִתְאַווּ תְּאֻנָּה. The double expression, הִתְאַווּ תְּאֻנָּה means they wanted to experience taavos. They were suffering an inner struggle. On one hand, they were holy beings, people who ate the mann. And on the other hand, they yearned for the taavos of the past. This is the meaning of הִתְאַווּ תְּאֻנָּה. They wanted to eat meat because they knew that food would make them more gashmiyus, and they hoped that this would enable them, once again, to pursue their taavos. They desired to eat meat, in particular, because it is written in early sefarim that meat, more than other foods, has the

potential to increase in a person a taavah for this world.

My father then explains the words וַיִּבְכוּ גַם, "Bnei Yisrael also wept once more", with an emphasis on the word גַּם, also. Bnei Yisrael also cried, but it was for an entirely different reason. As we wrote, quoting the Zohar, בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל are people at high levels. They also wanted a taavah, but not because they yearned to be more gashmiyusdig, like the people of the אֲסִפְסָפָה. They wanted a taavah so that they could have a test. Because the purpose of life is to have tests, and now that they were eating the mann, they didn't have tests.

They wanted to eat meat, which has the potential to bring them a yetzer hara and taavos. But they didn't want the aveiros – just the test so that they can overcome the yetzer hara.⁴

Nevertheless, Hashem was angry with them for crying and for begging for meat. As it states (11:10) וַיִּחַר אַף ה' מְאֹד וַיִּבְעִינִי מִנְּשָׂה רָע, "the wrath of Hashem flared greatly; and in the eyes of Moshe, it was bad."

Those who sought to be gashmiyusdig, and they wanted meat so they could pursue their aveiros, were certainly bad. But even the tzaddikim, the בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, Hashem was angry with them. This is because Hashem wanted that they should eat mann and have no yetzer hara at all. This was Hashem's will for this period of time, and they should have accepted Hashem's will, and not seek new avodos, which Hashem didn't request, and which Hashem didn't want, at this time.

It states towards the end of the parashah (12:6) בְּמִרְאֵה אֵלָיו אֶתְנַדַּע. Rebbe Yechezkel Kozmir zt"l (מאמר יחזקאל דף ק"ט) explains that a translation of מִרְאֵה is a mirror. A mirror is essentially a

3. This concept became clear in the story of the dibuk in the times of the Chofetz Chaim zt"l. This dibuk was very afraid of punishment because it was being tormented by the malachim for its many sins. Yet, it spoke nivul peh, indecent speech. People asked it why it spoke that way, now that it knows the severity of the judgment. It answered that it was accustomed to aveiros, and couldn't control itself.

4. some tzaddikim said that their entire chiyus came from their battles against the yetzer hara.

glass, through which one can look, but there is a silver coating on the back of the glass, which prevents looking through the glass. But that prevention has a great benefit. Because of it, he has a mirror, which is a useful item. Based on this, Rebbe Yechezkel of Kozmir explains that במראה can mean a

mirror, or something that creates a prevention. But it is specifically because of the prevention that the purpose is finalized. This is the meaning of במראה אליו אתודע. Because of the prevention, אליו אתודע, Hashem becomes revealed to him, and he attains a closeness with Hashem.⁵

5. It states (11:5) זכרנו את הדגה אשר נאכל במצרים חנם, "We remember the fish that we ate in Mitzrayim free of charge."

Rashi writes, חנם מן המצוות, free from mitzvos. Literally, Rashi means that they were saying that they miss the times when they didn't have any halachic obligations and restrictions and could eat whatever they desired. All this changed when they received the Torah.

But there is another lesson hinted to in the words חנם מן המצוות, taught (*b'derech tzachus*) from the Tiferes Shlomo (Likutim, Vaykhel וכל וד"ה וכל). He explains that when a person performs a mitzvah חנם, without any cost, he is חנם מן המצוות, which means he doesn't end up with the mitzvah at all. This is because mitzvos *should* cost money; they *should* be hard to perform. When everything is easy, inexpensive, and unchallenging, something essential is lacking in one's avodas Hashem. Hashem gave us a yetzer hara and hardships in life, because only by overcoming challenges and obstacles can one serve Hashem.

A bachur complained to his Rosh yeshiva that he found learning Torah, davening, and all parts of avodas Hashem very hard. He was jealous of his friends who seemed not to be dealing with his obstacles in their avodas Hashem. The Rosh yeshiva told him that the menorah has two mitzvos: הטבת הנרות, which means preparing the menorah to be lit. Included in this mitzvah is pouring out the used oil and wicks from the day before and pouring in fresh oil and wicks to be lit today. The second mitzvah is הדלקת הנרות, the actual lighting of the menorah. We would assume that the primary mitzvah of the menorah is lighting it, but it seems that preparing the menorah is an even greater act. As the Rambam (Hilchos Bais HaMikdash 9:7) writes, "Lighting the menorah can be done even by someone who isn't a kohen. Therefore, if a kohen prepared the menorah, and it was brought outside, a זר (someone who isn't a kohen) may light it." We see that הטבת הנרות, preparing the menorah, requires a kohen, while even a Yisrael can light the menorah.

The Rosh yeshiva explained that after the menorah is prepared, it is easy to light it. The toil is beforehand, getting the menorah cleaned and prepared for the mitzvah. And since there is more work involved in preparing the menorah, it is a higher form of avodah.

The Rosh yeshiva told the bachur not to be jealous of his friends, because his portion is higher than theirs. They find Torah and avodas Hashem easy, while he was constantly struggling. The struggle is the highest form of avodah.

The bachur wasn't satisfied with this explanation. He said, "Even so, I would prefer an easy avodas Hashem, as long as I can learn well and daven well and not suffer through all these struggles."

The Rosh yeshiva told him, "Come to my home Friday night after the meal, and we will discuss this."

The bachur arrived, and the Rosh yeshiva gave him a dish of sunflower seeds. The rosh yeshiva said, "I cracked open the shells of all these seeds for you, so it will be easier for you to eat them."

The bachur replied, "I prefer to be served a dish of black sunflower seeds, so that I can break open the shells. The whole fun of eating this food is to break the cover." The rosh yeshiva said, "Pay attention to what you just said. When things are given to you, prepared on a platter, it isn't interesting. The enjoyment comes from the work it involves."

People think that they came to the world to serve Hashem, and when things get hard, they must nevertheless continue serving Hashem. But this thinking is incorrect. Actually (Iyov 5:7) בן אדם לעמל יולד, "for man is born to work hard."

Bitachon

It states (Tehillim 32:10) והבוטח בך חסד יסובבנו, "For him who trusts in Hashem – Hashem's kindness will encompass him." The Midrash says on this pasuk, "Even if a person is a rasha, if he trusts in Hashem, he will be enveloped in Hashem's kindness."

It states (Koheles 7:20) כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא, "For there is no righteous man on earth who does good and sins not." The pasuk is saying that everyone has aveiros. Reb Elchanan Wasserman zt'l proves from this pasuk that bitachon is for everyone. If one needs to be perfect to be worthy of Hashem's kindness, no one could have bitachon. So, it must be that regardless of our deeds, we can trust in Hashem and benefit from His kindness.

Another source is (Tehillim 37:3) בטח בך ועשה טוב, "Trust in Hashem and do good." The Ramban says, 'בטח בך' is written in this pasuk

before ועשה טוב. This tells us that even before one does good, he can have *bitachon*.⁶

We say, תשועת ד' כהרף עין. Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmistrivka zt'l explained that when people have הרף עין, which means they stop looking to people for help, that is when they receive תשועת ד', Hashem's salvation.

The Chazon Ish zt'l teaches, "Hashem's help arrives the moment a person doesn't see any natural means for his salvation." When all hope and plans fall apart, one turns his heart to Hashem, and that is when he has his salvation.⁷

The Minchas Elazer zy'a would tell the following story when he performed the mitzvah of bikur cholim:

Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev zt'l was ill, and his students were in the next room, saying *Tehillim*. Suddenly they heard a loud sound. They quickly ran into their Rebbe's

He was created specifically for those hard times. The primary form of avodas Hashem is when it involves hardship and challenge. (From Reb Yeruchem of Mir, Daas Chachmah u'Mussar vol.2, p.122).

6. The Alter of Novardok zt'l had a small hut in the forest where he would study Torah and *mussar*. One night, he was learning in the hut, and his candle went out. He told himself, "If Hashem desires it, He will send me oil to light the lamp." He trusted in Hashem... but one is obligated to do *hishtadlus*. So, he opened the door of the hut.

He saw a man walking in the forest. The Alter of Novardok asked him for oil. He had oil, and he handed it to the Alter. It was a miracle. It was very unlikely that someone would be in the forest at that time and that he would have oil with him. The Alter was able to resume his studies for the rest of the night.

In the morning, the Alter took the leftover oil and stored it, so he would always remember the miracle that Hashem performed for him.

Once, there was a fire in his home, and this jar of oil was consumed in the flames. The Alter commented that he was happy that this occurred "because why should I remember this episode more than all the other miracles Hashem performs for me? Every moment of life is filled with miracles."

7. The Chazon Ish zt'l writes, "I don't feel that it's important to ask help from people often. I rely on the Chofetz Chaim, who often said, 'From a human, one doesn't ask too much.' Because what is man? Only Hashem can help."

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 7) teaches that *talmidei chachamim* do not need to contribute to the communal tax designated for the city's protection. For example, if the city is raising funds to build a protective wall or purchase weapons, the Torah scholars in that city are exempt from participating "because Torah scholars do not need natural protection." The Torah they study protects them. Generally, it is understood that the Torah that the scholars study protects them from all harm. The Chazon Ish, however, explains that it is their bitachon in Hashem that protects them. Talmidei chachamim trust in Hashem, and therefore, they don't have to participate in the tax for protection. They are protected by Hashem due to their bitachon.

room to see what happened, and they found their holy rebbe lying on the floor. He had fallen off the bed. They raised him and returned him onto his bed.

Some hours later, the Berdichever Rav called them in and asked for a cup of tea. This was a good sign, a sign of improvement.

Soon afterward, Reb Levi Yitzchok was standing on his feet, totally better.

He told his students, "As I was lying on my bed, I remembered what my Rebbe, the Magid of Mezritch, taught. It states *הבוטח בה' חסד יסובבנו*, 'For him who trusts in Hashem – Hashem's kindness will encompass him.' The Magid said that this isn't a *segulah*; it is a law of nature. Whoever trusts in Hashem will be enveloped in Hashem's kindness.

"So, I thought about ideas of *bitachon* until I felt confident that Hashem would heal me. That is when I got off my bed. But when I fell to the ground, I realized that my *bitachon* wasn't yet complete. So, I continued focusing on *emunah* and *bitachon* until I became perfectly healthy."

Tax collectors came to Brisk and audited the shops. One merchant was very worried he would be fined or punished because they could discover that he wasn't reporting all of his inventory and earnings. So, he came in a hurry to the home of Reb Chaim Brisker zt"l. Reb Chaim learned with the man a section in Nefesh HaChaim, which states that when one believes that everything is from Hashem and that there are no other forces and powers in the world, this belief results in salvation, and nothing can harm him. They studied this section three times, and indeed, a miracle occurred. The tax collectors left without charging the merchant.

This is what happened: When the officials reached this merchant's store, they wanted to take a break. So, they put a sign on the merchant's store to remember where they were up to and where to continue after their break. When they returned, they thought the sign meant that they had already checked this store and went on to the next store.

People were saying that Reb Chaim performed a miracle. Reb Chaim corrected them. "It wasn't a miracle; it was natural. Hashem implanted into the nature of the world that He will help those who trust in Him."

Lighting the Menorah

The Skulener Rebbe (Noam Eliezer) zt"l explains the unique significance of the Yom Tov of Chanukah with the following mashal. A large office tower was constructed in downtown Manhattan. Although the structure was complete, the interiors were completely dark because the electricity was not yet connected. Until there is light, the building is incomplete. So too, from Rosh Hashanah through Simchas Torah, Hashem recreates the world. But it is the light of Chanukah that illuminates and completes the world.

We can say the same about the Mishkan. The Mishkan was built with gold, silver, and other precious materials. While it was a splendid and holy edifice, it was incomplete. Hashem's holy light shining into the Mishkan completed it.

The parashah begins (8:2) *דבר אל אהרן ואמרת אליו בהעלתך את הנרות... יאירו שבעת הנרות*, "Speak to Aharon and say to him: When you kindle the lamps...the seven lamps will cast light." The menorah's light represents the light of kedushah that shone in the Mishkan, and this light of kedushah completed the Mishkan.

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 15:2) states, "When people install windows in their homes, they build them narrowly on the outside and wide on the inside so the sunlight should come into the house. However, when Shlomo built the Beis HaMikdash, he didn't form the windows in this fashion. Inside, the windows were narrow, and outside, the windows were wide so that the light of the Beis HaMikdash should shine outside." The entire world received holiness from the light of the Beis

HaMikdash. This light shone forth when the kohen lit the menorah.

A Jewish home is also a Mishkan, for it is where the Shechinah resides. The newlywed couple is excited about their new apartment and pretty furniture, but these things don't make their home complete. They need to

bring in the light of kedushah, and then their home is complete.

What is this light of kedushah that the couple should ignite inside their home?

Good middos bring the kedushah they need for their marriage's success.⁸

8. Someone asked the Tchebiner Rav *zt'l*, "My daughter is in shidduchim. What should we look for?"

The Tchebiner Rav replied, "Look for three things: middos, middos, and again, middos."

The Steipler Gaon *zt'l* asked someone to gather information about a certain *bachur* suggested for his granddaughter. The *shaliach* returned and relayed the beautiful things he heard about the *bachur*. He said, "I heard that he learns eighteen hours a day. He is a giant *talmid chacham*."

"What about *middos*?" the Steipler asked.

The *shaliach* didn't know anything about the *bachur's middos*. He replied, "How could he possibly have bad *middos*? He's always learning Torah!"

The Steipler replied, "Until now, all he had to deal with was his *shtender*. When he marries, he will have to deal with a wife. You must find out whether he has good *middos*. Without good *middos*, it is a disaster."

(I know a *yungerman* who has terrible *middos*. Just as an example, he refuses to turn off the lights at home. He claims that this is his wife's job, and he doesn't have to do it. In short, he only thinks about himself. Not surprisingly, the marriage didn't last. He is a scholar, but without *middos*, there was no foundation.)

Reb Moshe Unger *zt'l* wrote to his father-in-law, the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz *zt'l*, about a *bachur* suggested for his daughter. The Divrei Chaim responded, "You wrote about the *bachur's* many qualities, but you didn't address the key point. You didn't write whether he is a *mentch*. The Torah (*Devarim* 22:16) states אַתְּ בָּתִּי לֹאִישׁ נָתַתִּי לְאִישׁ, "I gave my daughter to a *mentch*."

Reb Gad'l Eisner *zt'l* would tell *bachurim* before their wedding, "There are *yungerleit* who want to become *malachim*, and the first thing they do is to become אִישׁ מְעַנְשֵׁן (not a *mentch* - not a human being)."

Once, many people were waiting in line to receive a *brachah* from Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach *zt'l*. One person didn't want to wait in line, so he cut in before the others and stretched out his hand to Reb Shlomo Zalman. Reb Shlomo Zalman told him, "I give you a *brachah* that you should be a *mentch*."

To cushion the insult, Reb Shlomo Zalman added, "Why don't you wish me, וְכֵן לִמִּנְיָ (that I too should become a *mentch*)?"

A *yungerman* came to Reb Shlomo Zalman with a shalom bayis problem.

He told Reb Shlomo Zalman that as a *bachur*, he departed from the traditional Yerushalmi garb (where even *bachurim* wear a *shtreimel*), choosing to wear European-style clothing.

But when he began shidduchim, he understood that he won't find a regular shidduch dressed as he did, so he put back on the Yerushalmi clothes. Nevertheless, he continued to go without a *shtreimel*.

He got married, lived a Ehrliche Jewish life in Yerushalayim, but still didn't wear a *shtreimel*.

One day, he came home with a \$2,000 *shtreimel*. He was sure his wife would rejoice, but she didn't. She said, "I am used to you without a *shtreimel*. I don't need the *shtreimel*."

"But I paid two thousand dollars for it!"

Two thousand dollars was a lot of money for them, and he was upset that he had spent so much on a

If Not Now, When?

Towards the end of his life, the Imrei Emes *zt'l* said, "When I was young, there were many sections of the Torah and aspects of *avodas Hashem* that I planned to get to later in my life. But now I know that whatever one doesn't grasp in his younger years, he will never end up getting to them." Therefore, there is no time like the present.

Sometimes people say, "I can't study Torah in this place." Or "I can't study Torah in this city," etc. They have excuses why they can't study Torah. Some people say, "I can't study Torah *today*. I have too much on

my head... I don't have *yishuv hadaas* today... and I woke up on the left side of the bed... This isn't a good day for Torah."

Reb Yisrael Salanter *zt'l* proves from *mattan Torah* that their claims aren't true. Two unique aspects about *matan Torah* are that it didn't occur in Eretz Yisrael. The Torah was given in the desert. Furthermore, there is no set date for Shavuos, other than that it is "fifty days after Pesach". As the Gemara says, "Shavuos is sometimes on the 5th of Sivan, sometimes the 6th, and sometimes the 7th. These two factors are to tell people that every place and every time is a good place and time for Torah."⁹

shtreimel that was unneeded. Their *shalom bayis* began to waver over the *shtreimel*, and he came to Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach *zt'l* for advice.

Reb Shlomo Zalman replied, "You have a good wife. In her merit, you improved your ways. You shouldn't allow two thousand dollars to ruin your *shalom bayis*."

"But what should I do about this loss of money?"

Reb Shlomo Zalman said, "I want to buy your *shtreimel* for myself," and he handed the young man two thousand dollars! The *shtreimel* didn't fit Reb Shlomo Zalman perfectly. His *rebbetzin* said, "It is very good that you helped this couple with their *shalom bayis*, but why must you embarrass yourself by wearing a *shtreimel* that is too big for you?"

He replied, "I am very happy with this *shtreimel*. I would even have wanted to be buried with it because buying it restored the *shalom bayis* between a couple."

Rebbe Avraham Elimelech of Karlin *zt'l* would say that when you inquire about a *bachur* and hear he has good *middos*, mark a number 1 in your notebook. Every other quality you hear about him is a zero. Place those zeros next to the one, and it becomes a large, impressive number. However, if there are many qualities but good *middos* are lacking, all you are left with are a series of zeros.

Pirkei Avos discusses good *middos*. Why is this *masechta* written in *Seder Nazikin*, which discusses financial damages? The *Tzaddikim* of Belz *zt'l* explain: The greatest damages occur when people have bad *middos*.

It states (*Avos* 1:5), אל תרבה שיחה עם האשה, "Don't speak excessively with your wife," and there was a young man who hardly spoke with his wife after the marriage, as he understood that this is how one keeps this directive from *chazal*. His wife, however, was very hurt by his silence. The Maharil Diskin *zt'l* heard about the problem, and he asked that the *yungerman* see him. The *yungerman* arrived and waited in the Maharil Diskin's study, but the Maharil didn't raise his eyes to greet him. The man stood there, waiting a long time, and the Maharil Diskin continued to ignore him. After a long time passed, the Maharil Diskin looked up from his Gemara, acknowledged him, and said, "Now you know how it feels to be ignored. That is how your wife feels. I hope you learned your lesson."

9. Reb Chaim Volozhiner *zt'l* asked someone why he didn't set aside time to study Torah. The man replied that he was busy working and had no time to learn Torah.

Reb Chaim Volozhiner told him that he sounded like the gentile nations of the world. Hashem offered them the Torah, and each nation replied that the Torah laws don't let them live.

When Hashem offered the Torah to Edom, and they heard that the Torah prohibits murder, Edom said,

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 88.) tells that Hashem raised the mountain over the Jewish nation and said, "If you don't accept the Torah, שם תהיה קבורתכם, "You will be buried there." The question is: It should have stated פה תהיה קבורתכם, "Here will be your burial." Why does it say שם, "there"?

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz *zt'l* answered that the Gemara is hinting that if a person says "When I get "there" I will start learning Torah..." or "When times are better, I will devote myself to Torah," שם תהיה קבורתכם, the attitude of שם, "there" (pushing things off until he gets "there") תהיה קבורתכם, will bury him. Instead, he should grab the reins of his life and devote himself to studying Torah.¹⁰

Segulos for Tefillah

It states (11:1), ויהי העם כמתאוונים רע באזני ה', "The nation complained in Hashem's ears. וישמע ה' ויחר אפו ותבער במ אש ה' ותאכל בקצה המחנה, Hashem heard and became angry. A fire burned them and consumed the [people at the] parameters of the camp." There are various explanations from the *Rishonim* to explain exactly which sin was committed here.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* says their sin was באזני ה', that the nation didn't believe that Hashem hears them and that He listens to their prayers.

People believe that Hashem *sees* everything, *knows* everything, and *leads* the world with *hashgachah pratis*, but it is hard

for them to believe that Hashem turns His ears to listen to us when we speak to Him. The nation, at that time, was lacking this *emunah*.

The Chasam Sofer writes, "The Yidden believed in the attribute of עיני ה', which is Hashem's surveillance of all His creations. However, with the concept of אזני ה', that Hashem listens to our prayers, and [that our tefillos can] change Hashem's decrees, they were doubtful. They said, 'Although Hashem's eyes are on us to bestow goodness on us, nevertheless, He doesn't listen to our tefillos to change His decree and grant us our desires.' This is the definition of ויהי העם כמתאוונים רע באזני ה'. The words אזני ה' mean they didn't believe that Hashem heard them. וישמע ה', Hashem showed us that He listens to our complaints, and so, He certainly hears our prayers and will fulfill all our desires."

Towards the end of the *parashah* it states, ויצעק משה אל ה' לאמר א-ל נא רפא נא לה, "Moshe shouted to Hashem saying, 'Please G-d, heal her now.'" The Chida writes that when Moshe was in heaven, he heard that when one says נא twice in his prayers, his tefillah will be answered. Therefore, Moshe said twice נא when he prayed for Miriam's recovery from *tzaraas*.

נא means please. We can explain that saying נא twice indicates that one should plead, again and again, and then his tefillos will be answered.

"Our forefather, Eisav, received the *brachah* תחיה על חרבך תחיה, to live by the sword. If we accept the Torah, how will we live?" Similarly, all nations said that if they accept the Torah, they won't be able to lead their way of life.

Reb Chaim Volozhiner told him, "You're saying the same thing because you're saying that if you accept the yoke of Torah, you won't have *parnassah*, and you won't be able to survive!"

10. Perhaps this is an explanation for the minhag to eat milchigs on Shavuos. When a person has an animal, he doesn't have to shecht it today. He can choose to shecht it tomorrow, or the next week, and eat the meat then. But regarding milk, the reality is very different. Every day, a cow produces milk, and if one fails to milk the cow, that milk will be lost forever. We eat milchigs on Shavuos to remind us that we must grab opportunities for Torah and mitzvos, because whatever opportunity one doesn't grab will be lost from him, *chalilah*.

A *segulah* for tefillah to be answered is to daven after passing a difficult test, especially when the test is related to matters of *kedushah*. The holy *sefarim* tell us that this is an *eis ratzon* for tefillah. Therefore, tefillos said at this time are answered.¹¹

After one endures shame and humiliation silently, it is also a good time for tefillah. Also, when one is *mevater* at a machlokes, it is a good time for tefillah.¹² Tefillos said at this time are answered.¹³

Another *segulah* for your tefillos to be answered is to be cautious with your speech.

It states (9:20), על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו. This can be translated as על פי, if a person is cautious with his words, ה' יחנו, Hashem will dwell with him. ועל פי, but if one isn't careful with his speech, ה' יסעו, this causes Hashem to depart from him, *chas veshalom*.

The holy *sefarim* say that when one talks forbidden speech and then he speaks Torah and tefillah with that same mouth, it is like he is bringing a gift to the King in a sullied vessel. This is the reason his tefillos aren't accepted.

Kitzur Shlah writes, "If you want your tefillos to be accepted by Hakadosh Baruch

11. A *yungerman* heard this idea at a shiur he attended. After the *shiur*, he left for the hospital in Be'er Sheva, where his young daughter was staying, her weak body battling "the disease" (cancer) r"l.

The doctors at the hospital informed him that his daughter needed a specific medication that could only be purchased in Tel Aviv.

The *yungerman* traveled to Tel Aviv to buy the medicine. He got off the bus in Tel Aviv's central bus terminal and was confronted with a difficult test in the area of *shmiras einayim*. He passed the test. Realizing that it was now an *eis ratzon*, he went off to the side of the bus terminal and davened for his daughter's recovery.

After the tefillah, while walking to the pharmacy to buy the medication, he received a phone call. It was the doctors back at the hospital. They said, "Your daughter woke up a few moments ago, and after checking her, we see improvement. She no longer needs that medication."

12. It states (8:19) וְנִתְּנָה אֶת הַלְוִיִּים וְנִתְּנָם לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעִבְדוֹ אֵת עֲבֹדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּלְכַפֵּר עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, "Then I assigned the Levi'im to be presented to Aharon and his sons from among Bnei Yisrael to perform the service of Bnei Yisrael in Ohel Moed and to provide atonement for Bnei Yisrael." The Torah says that the Levi'im atoned for Bnei Yisrael, but the Torah doesn't tell us how the Levi'im did this. They didn't bring a korban, so how did they bring atonement?

The Shem MiShmuel (תר"ע) answers that Klal Yisrael saw that the Levi'im were given a special mission from Hashem, a service that they can't do, but they weren't jealous, and they didn't complain. They accepted that the Levi'im were chosen and not them, and they were at peace with that. This *vitur* was a great merit, and that is what brought atonement to Bnei Yisrael.

13. A *yungerman* told me, "For the first seven years after my *chasunah*, I didn't have children. Once, two women were fighting, and one embarrassed the other. My mother knew that this was her opportunity. She reads the Torah Wellsprings and knows that when one is humiliated and doesn't answer back, he has the power of tefillah. So my mother went to the woman who was shamed but didn't answer back and asked her for a *brachah* that her son should have children. She gave a *brachah*. A year later I had my first child."

A group of friends traveled to Miron to spend Shabbos together. One of them had forgotten to bring his Shabbos *bekeshe*. It would be very embarrassing for him to spend Shabbos in his weekday jacket (which was thin and not respectful even for the weekdays). A friend saw his dilemma and said, "You can wear my *bekeshe*, and I'll wear my weekday jacket. That way, I will earn a *chesed*. Of course, I will have humiliation too, and I hereby give that merit to my son, who is getting older and hasn't yet found his *shidduch*."

It took only five days, and his son was engaged.

Hu, be cautious with your mouth because that is your utensil for prayer. Be cautious and don't speak profanely, by cursing, swearing, or speaking *lashon hara* because prayer is a gift to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and the mouth is the vessel that holds your gift. The vessel cannot be dirty. If it is dirty, it is

a disgrace for the King and the gift. Rather, speak Torah, tefillah, permitted speech, and nothing else."¹⁴

The Zohar (Vayikra 88b) says that every day, there is a moment that the Or HaGanuz shines, and at that time, all tefillos are answered. Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer zt'l (Imrei

14. The Ben Ish Chai (*Niflaim Maaseicha* 124) told the following story:

Tuvyah the Judge was revered and honored by most of the populace. All judicial matters were settled according to his judgment. But he also had his share of enemies who always tried to harm him.

Eventually, they succeeded. The king believed their slander and decided to fire Tuvyah and punish him for his alleged crimes.

Tuvyah caught on to what was about to happen, so he put on civilian clothing and escaped. People saw Tuvyah passing through the dark streets that night, but didn't realize that he was the celebrated Tuvyah, who just a few hours ago was the most influential person in the country, after the king.

Tuvyah exited the city, traversed a desert, and reached a river. The other side of the river meant freedom for Tuvyah. But how could he cross the river without a boat or raft? He didn't know how to swim.

Soon the king would discover that Tuvyah escaped, and he would pursue him. Tuvyah stood on the riverside, perplexed and worried.

A peasant recognized Tuvyah the Judge. Tuvyah told him that he needed to cross the river. The villager was short and skinny, and under normal circumstances, wouldn't consider swimming across the river while carrying a tall, heavy man like Tuvyah. But the villager realized that this was his opportunity to find favor in the eyes of this great judge. He said, "Honored judge, hang on to my back. I will swim with you across the river."

Thinking about the reward and wealth he would receive for doing this, the peasant almost didn't feel Tuvyah's weight.

When they were three-quarters across the river, Tuvyah said, "If Hashem will be kind to me, and I become a judge again, I will reward you immensely..."

"You mean you're not the grand judge anymore?"

"That's right," Tuvyah replied. "Corrupt people slandered me to the king, and now I'm escaping judgment."

The peasant dropped Tuvyah in the water and said, "When you become judge again, I will pick you up," and the peasant swam back to shore, alone.

People rebuked the peasant. "If you were able to bring Tuvyah three-quarters across the river, you should have brought him all the way."

The peasant replied, "I'm weak and feeble. I can't carry a heavy person like Tuvyah. As long as I imagined the great honor and wealth I would earn for helping Tuvyah, I had strength. I almost didn't feel his weight. But when Tuvyah told me that he was escaping and that he couldn't reward me, I suddenly felt his full weight and didn't have the strength to bring him to shore."

The Ben Ish Chai told this story to teach us that we must be careful with our speech because so many troubles come from unwise speech and from bad speech. If only Tuvyah had remained silent, his life would have been spared.

Similarly, all forbidden speech, and even unnecessary talk, result in heartache — to oneself and to others.

Pinchas Hashalem Bo) said that therefore the Midrash (Devarim Rabba 2:12) says קוה אל ה' that a person should daven even a hundred times. He shouldn't lose hope from tefillah, because if he davens many times, perhaps he will say a tefillah at the moment that the Or HaGanuz shines, and his tefillos will be answered.

Nevertheless, there are times that we **know** that the Or HaGanuz shines. One

primary time is before daybreak (before *netz hachamah*). Another time is when we read parashas *Bahaaloscha*. Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer zt'l (Imrei Pinchas, Bahaaloscha) teaches that parashas *Bahaaloscha* (this entire week), the Or HaGanuz is aroused, and it shines.

We understand from this that this week is an auspicious time for tefilla.

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פרקי על אבות



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