

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita*

Shemos



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Torah Wellsprings - Shemos

Shidduchim are Made in Heaven

It states in the Parashah (2:15) וַיִּכְרַח מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי וַיִּפְרֹעַ וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְיָן וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל הַבְּאֵר "And Moshe fled from before Pharaoh. He stayed in the land of Midyan, and he sat down by a well." What is the significance of being near a well?

Rashi writes, "[Moshe] learned from Yaakov who found his shidduch by the באר, by a well." Moshe went to the well to find his shidduch, and indeed, he found his shidduch near the well. Yisro's daughters came to the well to draw water for their sheep, and Moshe helped them give them water. This eventually led to his marriage to Tziporah, Yisro's daughter.

The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 1:32) states, "Moshe Rabbeinu followed in the ways of the Avos. Three received their shidduch by the well: Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Moshe. By Yitzchak, it states (Bereishis 24:62) וַיִּצְחָק בָּא מִבּוֹיַת הַבְּאֵר לְחַי רֹאִי, "Yitzchak was on his way, coming from the well Lachai-Roi," and that is where he met with Rivkah.

Also, Eliezer found Rivkah by a well.¹

About Yaakov it states (Bereishis 29:2) וַיִּרְא וַהֲגִידָהּ בְּאֵר בְּשָׂדֶה, "He looked, and behold! a well was in the field." At this well, he met Rachel.

About Moshe it states וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל הַבְּאֵר, "He sat down by the well."

Why are wells *mesugal* for finding shidduchim?

To answer this question, Reb Yonason Binyamin Weiss Shlita, Rav of Montreal, quotes a lesson from the *Gidulei Tahara*. The *Gidulei Tahara* (שו"ת בסוף ספרו שאלה ב') notes that the Torah mentions two types of mikvahs: one is a מְעֵיָן, spring, and the other

is a בּוֹר, a pit filled with water. As it states (Vayikra 11:36) אֶךָ מְעֵיָן וּבּוֹר מְקוּוֹה מַיִם, "only a spring, or a pit of gathered water..." The third type of mikvah, which is discussed in Chazal, is the בְּאֵר, a well.

A מְעֵיָן, a spring, came into existence without the involvement of man. A spring spurts naturally from the earth, flowing and forming its path through mountains or fields. Both the water and its location are from heaven, without man's involvement and interference.

In contrast, the בּוֹר, a pit filled with water, is manmade. The pit was dug by a human being, and the water was directed into the pit by a human. So, both the water and the location are due to man's intervention.

The third form of water is a בְּאֵר, a well. *Gidulei Taharah* explains that the בְּאֵר is a hybrid of the two above-mentioned water sources. The water from a well comes from heaven without the hand of man. It comes forth from underground without human intervention. However, the pool which holds the water is the work of man. This is because the water comes up on its own, naturally, but a human being widened the area where the water gathers to make it into a usable pool.

So, a מְעֵיָן, a spring, is entirely from heaven, and a בּוֹר, a pit filled with water, is the work of man, and the בְּאֵר, a well, is a combination of both.

Based on this lesson from the *Gidulei Taharah*, Reb Y. B. Weiss Shlita explains that we can now understand why the Avos hakedoshim and Moshe Rabbeinu found their shidduchim by a בְּאֵר, a well. This is because a shidduch is from Hashem, but a

1. Eliezer stood by the well, as it states (24:11) וַיִּבְרַךְ הַגְּמָלִים מִחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם " [Eliezer] made the camels kneel outside the city beside the well of water..." and that is where he met Rivkah.

person must make hishtadlus. Like a well, it is from Hashem, with a person doing his part.

Heaven decrees *בת פלוני לפלוני*, that this woman should marry this man. Hashem also decrees on which day this shidduch should occur, and at which location. Furthermore, Hashem arranges all the steps needed to enable the shidduch to transpire. Nevertheless, each person must do his share of hishtadlus. This is like the *בְּאֵר*, the well. It is from heaven, but human intervention is also needed. Hishtadlus is also required.

With this explanation, Reb Weiss adds a wonderful explanation on the pasuk (Yirmiyahu 2:13) *כִּי שְׁתֵּיתִים רְעוּת עֲשָׂה עִמִּי אֶתִּי עֲזְבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים לְחַצְב* (2:13) *לְקַח בְּאֵרוֹת בְּאֵרֹת נִשְׁבְּרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִגְלוּ הַמַּיִם*, "For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the spring of living waters, to dig for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that do not hold water.

It is written *בְּאֵרֹת* (wells), but it is read *בְּרוֹת* (pits).

The navi is asking why did you leave the source of a *בְּאֵר*, which is from heaven, and instead, you chose *בְּוֹר*, pit, which means you want to do everything alone – thinking that everything is dependent on you.

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 68:4) states, "A princess (*מַטְרוֹנָא*) asked Reb Yosi ben Chalafta, "How many days did it take for Hakadosh Baruch Hu to create the world?" Reb Yosi replied that Hashem created the world in six days. She asked, "What does Hashem do from then until today?" Reb Yosi replied *הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יוֹשֵׁב וּמוֹוֹג זַיּוּגִים*, בתו של פלוני לפלוני, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu sits and arranges shidduchim..."

This Midrash needs explanation because there are so many things that Hashem does from creation until today, aside from shidduchim. Everything that happens in the world is from Hashem. The entire creation is created anew every day, and even at every moment. Furthermore, everything that occurs in the world is by Hashem's hashgachah.

So, why did the princess ask, "What does Hashem do from creation until today?" What type of question is that? Hashem does everything! Everything we see happening in the world is from Hashem!

Also, why didn't Reb Yosi tell her that? Why did he only tell her that Hashem makes shidduchim?

Reb Binyamin Mendelsohn, zt'l, the Rav of Komemius, answers that the princess knew that Reb Yosi believes that Hashem does everything. Her question was, "What does Hashem do after creation that from there, we can prove that it was from Hashem and that it wasn't a natural occurrence?"

Reb Yosi told her that the answer is shidduchim. In the realm of shidduchim, one sees clearly *מִה' אִשָּׁה לְאִישׁ*, that the shidduch was arranged in heaven. The greatest wonders are found by shidduchim.

When the princess heard Reb Yosi's answer, that Hashem makes shidduchim, she replied, "I can make a thousand shidduchim in one day." She claimed that we don't see Hashem's hashgachah in shidduchim. She considered shidduchim a natural occurrence, something that even she could do.

Reb Yosi was silent and left. He didn't answer her.

The princess took a thousand of her male slaves and a thousand of her female slaves, and she paired them up. "You marry her, and you marry her," etc.

In the morning, all these slaves returned to the princess, complaining that they didn't want the spouse she gave them. One was wounded on the head, one had a wound on the leg, and so on. None of the shidduchim succeeded. The princess told Reb Yosi what happened. She said, "There is no G-d like your G-d. Your Torah is true. You spoke correctly."

Reb Yosi replied, "I told you. Although you think it is a simple matter, it is hard

before Hakadosh Baruch Hu like splitting the Yam Suf..."

She discovered that shidduchim are not made by natural means, but rather entirely by Hashem's hashgachah. If you want to find Hashem in the world in a manner that leaves no doubts, it can be found in the realm of shidduchim.²

Calm Life with Bitachon

It states (1:13) וַיַּעַבְדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָרֶךְ, "The Mitzrim enslaved Bnei Yisrael with back breaking labor (בְּפָרֶךְ)."

The Midrash translates בְּפָרֶךְ to mean (HaGadol, Shemos 13) בפה רך with soft speech. How was slavery enacted with "soft speech"?

The Midrash explains that when the Mitzrim were about to start slavery, they didn't announce their intentions. Instead, the Mitzrim made it sound that working for Pharaoh would benefit them. Pharaoh promised to pay a handsome sum for every brick produced.

Many Yidden were excited at the prospect of earning a lot of money, and they put much effort into producing as many bricks as they could on the first day. Amram, however, made only one brick, and then he stopped working. At the end of the day, the sum of each person's production was counted. If someone made a hundred bricks that day, it was decreed that he must produce that amount every day, but from then on without pay.

As time went on, matters became even harder for the Jewish nation because Pharaoh stopped supplying straw for the production. He said (5:7-8) ... לֹא תִבְנוּ הַלְבֵנִים... וְאֵת מִתְפַּנֵּת הַלְבֵנִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם עֹשִׂים תְּמוּל שְׁלֹשׁ תְּשִׁימוּ עֲלֵיהֶם לֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ, "You shall not continue to give stubble to the people to make the bricks like yesterday and the day before yesterday. Let them go and gather stubble for themselves. But the number of bricks they were making yesterday and the day before yesterday, you shall impose upon them; you shall not reduce it."

So, whoever worked hard at the beginning suffered more. Each day, he had to make the number of bricks he made on that first day, and, as we wrote, this quota became harder as time went on.

Why didn't Amram work hard on the first day? Why did he produce one brick? Similarly, there were other tzaddikim who made a few bricks, but they didn't work too hard. Why?

It is because they trusted in Hashem. They had *bitachon* that Hashem would support them tomorrow and in the future. This turned out to be for their benefit because they didn't have to make too many bricks when the forced labor began. The same applies to those who have bitachon, in every generation. They end up gaining from it. But those who lack bitachon become enslaved to their work.

It states (2:13) וַיֵּצֵא בַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וְהַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי אֲנָשִׁים עֹבְרִים וַיִּצְיָא, "And he went out on the second day, and behold, two Jewish men were quarreling."

2. Let us think about this story: This מטרונה, princess, didn't lack money. She was undoubtedly fabulously wealthy if she had a thousand male and a thousand female servants. So, she likely didn't spare any expense when she tried to prove she could make shidduchim. She probably hired the best shadchanim, coaches, and human nature experts to help set up the most-suited matches. Yet, from the thousand shidduchim, not one of them lasted a day. She discovered that without Hashem's plan and help, a shidduch cannot succeed.

When we seek shidduchim and ask advice from experts and wise people, remember that even when it seems like an amazingly suited shidduch, it won't work if it wasn't decreed in heaven. There are also shidduchim that seem very distant from being suitable, but such a shidduch might happen, if that is Hashem's decree.

Rashi writes, "This was Dasan and Aviram, the people who left over the manna."

Dasan v'Aviram did other aveiros. They were the ones who helped Korach with his machlokes against Moshe and Aharon. Why did Rashi specify the aveirah of leaving over the manna?

Rashi is hinting to us that the reason they fought is because they lacked bitachon. When one has bitachon, he doesn't get into fights because he trusts that his fellow man isn't taking away parnassah from him. Each person has his destiny and hashgachah. This is why Rashi writes that Dasan v'Aviram, the ones who were quarreling, were the same people who left over the manna for the next day. They left over the manna for the next day because they didn't trust in Hashem to support them on the following day. This same lack of bitachon resulted in their dispute.

To Trust in the Upcoming Salvation

Chazal (Shemos Rabba 1:24, Sotah 12:) tell that Yocheved, Moshe's mother, made a חופת נעורים בתובה, a chuppah in the teivah (casket) which she placed in the Nile.

But what was the purpose of making a chuppah? There was no chasunah happening now! It was a time of immense tzaar! A Jewish mother had to place her three-month-old baby into the Nile to face the danger of the water and the many bloodthirsty Mitzrim. Why was this time to make a chuppah?

The Ponovitzer Rav zt'l answers that Yocheved had bitachon. She was sure that her son would survive. So, she made a chuppah over the casket to remind herself

that her son would certainly get married one day.

Miriam stood from the distance, to watch what was happening to Moshe, as it states (2:4) וַתִּתְצַב אֶחָתוּ מִרְיָם מֵרָחֵק לִדְעוּתָהּ מִהּ יִשְׁפָּטָהּ לוֹ "His sister stood from afar, to know what would be done to him."

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l (al HaTorah) writes, "Miriam was certain that her brother would be saved, but she didn't know how, in which manner. And then she saw that Pharaoh's daughter came and saved Moshe. We learn from this that whenever there is a tzarah, salvation will eventually come, even if presently we don't know how. Every day, we should hope and trust that Hashem will save us from the tzarah."

It states (2:6) וַתִּפְתַּח וַתִּרְאֶהוּ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד וְהִנֵּה נֹעֵר בְּכָה וַתִּחַמַּל עָלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר מִיֶּלְדֵי הָעִבְרִים זֶה "[Basyah] opened [the casket] and saw the child, and behold, the lad was weeping. She had compassion on him and said, "This is from the Jewish children."

The Meforshim ask, how did Basyah know this was a Jewish child?

Also, from the pasuk, it seems that she realized it was a Jewish child only after she heard his crying and not initially when she saw the child. What was unique about his cry that convinced her that this was a Jewish child?

Reb Mordechai Chaim of Slonim zt'l answered that a Jew doesn't cry like a goy. A goy cries out of despair, but a Yid cries with hope that His Father in Heaven will save him. He never loses hope. Basyah heard the baby cry with hope, so she knew this was a Jewish child.³

3. It states (1:14) וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת-חַיֵּיהֶם "they embittered their lives." The taamim (trop) on these words is a happy tune - קדמה ואזלא. The Rebbe of Vorke asks why is a happy tune sung on these bitter words. The answer is that due to the severity of the tzaros, קדמה ואזלא, the Jewish nation left Mitzrayim earlier.

It states (1:12) וְכַאֲשֶׁר יַעֲנֶה אֹתוֹ כֵּן יִרְבֶּה וְכֵן יִפְרֹץ "As much as they would afflict them, so they would increase and so they would strengthen." Chazal ask that it should state כֵּן רַבָּה וְכֵן פָּרַח "So they *did* increase, and so they *did* gain strength." Why is it written in the future tense? (see Rashi)

Years later, Moshe was chosen to take the Yidden out of Mitzrayim. However, after his first attempt, their situation worsened. They now had to gather straw to make bricks, unlike previously, when the straw was provided.

Moshe complained (5:22) לָמָּה הִרְעַתָּה לְעַם הַזֶּה לָמָּה זֶה שָׁלַחְתָּנִי, וּמֵאֵז בְּאֵתִי אֶל פְּרַעֲוֹה לְדַבֵּר בְּשִׁמְךָ הֲרַע לְעַם הַזֶּה וְהִצַּל לֹא הִצַּלְתָּ אֶת עַמְּךָ. "Why have You harmed this people? Why have You sent me? Since I have come to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has harmed this people, and You have not saved Your nation."

Moshe's point was that after Hashem sent him to Pharaoh to save the nation, things should have become easier for the Yidden. But the opposite occurred. Things were becoming worse than ever before.

Hashem replied (6:1) עֲתָה תֵרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר אֲעֲשֶׂה לְפָרַעֲוֹה כִּי בְיַד חֲזָקָה יִשְׁלַחֵם וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה יִגְרָשֵׁם מֵאֶרְצוֹ. "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh, for with a mighty hand he will send them out, and with a mighty hand he will drive them out of his land."

What is Hashem's answer? The question still seems valid. Why did matters become harder for the Jewish people when the steps of salvation had begun?

The Kli Yakar explains:

"It is known that every night, moments before daybreak, the darkness becomes even darker. And then the light of the morning arrives and shines through. Similarly, most ill people suddenly become stronger moments before their passing. They sit on their bed and request to eat something, although they are about to die. The same is true with winter. At the end of the winter, it becomes colder, and then, the sun wins. This is the rule of nature. When one feels that something or someone wants to terminate or

destroy him, he will force himself to become stronger to fight it off. He refuses to give up. He does whatever he can do. But in the end, he loses because the power opposing him will overcome him."

The Kli Yakar explains that this is why the night becomes darker right before daybreak. It senses that morning is approaching, which will remove the darkness, so it fights back by becoming even darker. In the end, it doesn't succeed. The sun shines forth, and the night disappears, but it is the night's attempt before it is removed with the morning light.

The ill know when their end is approaching, so they fight harder to live and to survive. They become strong; they sit up and talk, although, before that moment, they couldn't. Also, the winter senses that its season will soon end, so it becomes even stronger. When something fears it will become extinguished, it becomes stronger than before.

The Kli Yakar concludes, "The same was with Pharaoh. Pharaoh became crueller than ever before. This was a clear sign that his end was near. This was the reason Pharaoh became stronger at this time.

"This is the meaning of עֲתָה תֵרְאֶה, 'Now you will see.' With the word עֲתָה, 'now,' Hashem answered Moshe's question. Moshe asked לָמָּה הִרְעַתָּה, why have things become harder for the Jewish nation? Logic says that things should become easier for the nation at this time. But it was because Pharaoh had to send them out of Mitzrayim that he now fought against them with a mighty arm. This was actually a sign that salvation was imminent."

The Kli Yakar gives another explanation. Once again, Moshe Rabbeinu questioned the circumstances in Mitzrayim after he went to

Rebbe Yitzchak of Vorke zt'l said, quoting his rebbe, Rebbe Dovid of Lelov zt'l that it is written in future tense because it is a rule for all generations. Whenever there is a *gezeirah* or a *tzarah*, something good will come from it.

Pharaoh according to Hashem's command that Pharaoh free the Jewish nation. Why were matters only becoming worse? Hashem replied that it was so he could redeem Bnei Yisroel sooner. They were destined to be in Mitzrayim for 400 hundred years, but only 210 years had passed. Therefore, slavery had to become harder for it to be considered that they were in Mitzrayim for 400 hundred years.⁴

The Reward Before the Good Deed

Pharaoh told the midwives (Shifrah and Puah) that they should kill every male child that was born. They disobeyed him, as it states (1:17) וַתִּירָאנָן הַמְּגִלֹּדֹת אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים וְלֹא עָשׂוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵינוּ "The midwives feared Hashem, so they did not do as the king of Mitzrayim had spoken to them. They enabled the boys to live."

They were rewarded for this, as it states (1:21) וַיְהִי כִּי יָרְאוּ הַמְּגִלֹּדֹת אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בָּתִּים "Now it took place when the midwives feared Hashem, that He made houses⁵ for them."

The Alshich asks that it is obvious that they were rewarded for their yiras Shamayim. Why does the pasuk have to mention it?

The Alshich answers that וַיְהִי כִּי יָרְאוּ הַמְּגִלֹּדֹת אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים means that they were rewarded even before they saved the children. The moment they decided to fear Hashem and not to kill the children, they were worthy to be rewarded.

It states (1:12) וַכֹּאשֶׁר יַעֲנֶה אֹתוֹ כֵּן יִרְבֶּה וְכֵן יִפְרֹץ "As much as they would afflict them, so did they multiply and so did they gain strength."

From the simple reading of the pasuk, it seems that *after* the Mitzrim afflicted the Jewish nation, Hashem blessed the Yidden with כֵּן יִרְבֶּה וְכֵן יִפְרֹץ.

However, Rashi writes, בכל מה שהם נותנין לב, לענות כן לב הקב"ה להרבות ולהפריץ "In whatever way they set their heart to afflict them, so was the heart of Hakadosh Baruch Hu to multiply them and to strengthen them." Shem MiShmuel (תער"ב) learns from this that Hashem strengthened and multiplied Bnei Yisrael even before the Mitzrim actually did anything to them.

Rashi writes, ונותים לב לענות, "They set their heart to afflict them." The Mitzrim thought to harm Yidden, but they hadn't done so yet. Even at that time, Hakadosh Baruch Hu increased and strengthened Bnei Yisrael.

This is because Hashem considers an evil thought of a non-Jew to be as if he had already performed (see Yerushalmi Peah 1:1). Therefore, when they had this plan, even before they implemented it, Hashem changed the nature of the Jewish nation to bear six children at every birth (as this is what occurred in Mitzrayim).

The Shem MiShmuel concludes, "Everyone can learn a kal vechomer from this for himself. If for an evil thought of the Mitzrim, Hakadosh Baruch Hu changed the nature of the Jewish nation, kal vechamor, when a Yid makes a kabbalah tovah (good resolution to improve his avodas Hashem), he certainly immediately becomes a new person. And therefore, everything will become better for him, b'ruchniyus and b'gashmiyus, and he will have refuos and yeshuos.⁶

4. We quote the Kli Yakar: "We can also explain... that the 400 years the Jewish nation was destined to be in Mitzrayim wasn't complete. They were only there for 210 years. This is the reason the tzarah and the slavery increased so that the fewer years could be counted as more years. This brought the redemption earlier. עתה תראה, 'Now you will see.' Now you can see what I will do to Pharaoh."

5. Rashi explains: houses of Kehunah, Leviyah, and Malchus.

6. Reb Yankele Galinsky zt'l said that people like to discuss the news, such as "this person died," or "that person had a baby," and the like. But these happenings aren't "news" at all in heaven, because the future

The Cure is Prepared before the Wound

Hashem told Moshe to tell the nation (3:16) פָּקֹד פְּקֹדֶתַי אֶתְכֶם, "I have surely remembered you..." Rashi (3:18) writes, "As soon as you say this phrase [פָּקֹד פְּקֹדֶתַי] to them, they will hearken to your voice, for this code was transmitted to them from Yaakov and Yosef, that with this phrase they will be redeemed..."

The Shlah teaches that פָּקֹד are the letters before צָרָה, to show that "Hakadosh Baruch Hu prepares the *refuah* before the *makah*. The cure is ready and in place even before the trouble arrives.

The following story happened in the days of Reb Shlomo Kluger zt'l:

A city governor held a meeting with the heads of the Jewish community. He explained to them that an army unit was planning to be in their city for some days, and every homeowner must take in two soldiers, feed them, and give them a place to sleep.

This news was taken to be a great tragedy for the Jewish community. Firstly, there were many poor people in the city. They could hardly support themselves. How could they support two soldiers? Furthermore, the bigger problem was a spiritual one. The soldiers were lowly goyim. It was viewed as a spiritual danger for the young Jewish children to have the soldiers around the home.

Some of the people of this city were chasidim of a certain tzaddik. They sent a delegation to this tzaddik to ask him to

daven for them to be spared from this new decree.

The messengers stood before the tzaddik, and amidst tears, they expressed their great tzaar and worry.

The Rebbe replied that he needed a large sum of money for pidyon shvuyim (to save someone from jail). The Rambam (Matanos Aniyim 8:10) writes, אין מצוה כפדיון שבויים, that saving someone from jail is of the greatest mitzvos. If the people of the city raise the money for this mitzvah, the tzaddik said, in this merit, they will have a salvation.

The messengers returned to their city and began knocking on people's doors, asking them for money for pidyon shvuyim. They told the people of the town that the tzaddik said that this mitzvah will save them from the decree of the soldiers.

The chasidim who lived in this city believed in the greatness of this tzaddik and they donated generously. Those who weren't chasidim, however, were skeptical. They weren't convinced that this donation would bring them their salvation.

The people collecting the money told them, "If soldiers come to your home, it will anyway cost you a lot of money because you will have to feed them. Isn't it better to give the money for a mitzvah of pidyon shvuyim rather than to give money to the soldiers? And this that you are worried that the salvation won't occur even after you perform this mitzvah, we promise you that if the tzaddik's salvation doesn't occur, chalilah,

is known in heaven. They know what will occur before it happens. So, what is "news" in heaven? When a human being, carved out of earth, overcomes his yetzer hara! That is "news" in heaven because even malachim couldn't predict that. As Chazal say, "Everything is in the hands of heaven except for yiras Shamayim" (Brachos 33:). A person can choose, and when a person overcomes his temptations, Hakadosh Baruch Hu announces the news to all the malachim in heaven. "This person overcame the yetzer hara. He fought and struggled for My sake."

The first pasuk of the parashah is written in present tense, וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרָיִם, "And these are the names of Bnei Yisrael coming to Mitzrayim..." (It doesn't state אֲשֶׁר בָּאוּ, which would be past tense.) This is because the concept of going down to Mitzrayim occurs in every Yid in every generation. People go through hardships and challenges and have to fight to overcome the yetzer hara that stands in their way.

we will return the money that you donated." This convinced them, and they donated generously towards the cause.

When the sum was raised, the messengers went to the tzaddik and gave him the money. The tzaddik redeemed the person from jail, and he blessed the messengers and the people of the city that in the merit of this mitzvah, they should be saved from all their enemies.

The salvation came. A few days later, the governor of the city received a letter from the king's palace stating that the heads of the army changed their plan. The soldiers won't be passing through their city. The governor immediately relayed the news to the Jewish heads of the city. "You won't be bothered by the soldiers. They won't be passing through our city." Everyone in the city rejoiced.

The chasidim were discussing the great miracle their Rebbe performed. But the non-chasidim said, "We studied the letter well. The letter was written before the tzaddik received the money for pidyon shvuyim! The army changed their mind before the Rebbe gave his brachah!" They said that the chasidim must return the money to them. They only gave the money if the tzaddik would annul the gezeirah, but as it turned out, they didn't need the Rebbe's brachos to annul the gezeirah.

The Chasidim responded that the salvation was undoubtedly due to the tzaddik's merit, and they claimed they didn't have to return the money.

The din Torah was brought before Reb Shlomo Kluger. Those who weren't chasidim said they wanted the psak to be according to halachah, without any compromises, and they wanted to know the reason behind Reb Shlomo Kluger's ruling.

Reb Shlomo Kluger said that he would need to think it over and answer them in the morning.

In the morning, he told them that the chassidim were correct. The miracle occurred in the Rebbe's merit, and therefore, they don't have to give back the money. He proved this from the navi Shmuel (שמואל ב', פרק ו'). It states that the aron was in the home of Oved-Edom for three months. It states there (pasuk 12) לְמֶלֶךְ דָּוִד לֵאמֹר בְּרַךְ ה' אֶת בַּיִת עֲבָד אֱדֹם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ בְּעֵבֹר אַרְוֵן הָאֱלֹקִים, "And it was told to King Dovid saying, 'Hashem has blessed the house of Oved-Edom, and all that belongs to him, because of the aron of Hashem.'"

Chazal (Brachos 63:) say, "What brachah did he receive? His wife and his eight daughters-in-law each had six children in one birth." This blessing and miracle occurred when the aron Elokim was still in Oved-Edom's home.

The aron Elokim was Oved-Edom's home for three months only. A child is born after nine months of pregnancy, or occasionally after seven months, but never after three months. So, it is certain that the miraculous pregnancies of six children in one birth began even before Oved-Edom had the aron in his home. We see that Hashem prepares the reward for the good that one will do in the future.

Reb Shlomo Kluger said that the same occurred with their salvation when the army decided that they wouldn't pass through their village.

I will tell another story related to this subject, which happened with my father and my grandfather zy'a. My grandfather, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, would spend the Nine Days specifically in Yerushalayim. On the night of Tisha b'Av, his custom was to look, from a distance, at the place where the Beis HaMikdash once stood. One year (תשכ"ה) my father went with his father Rebbe Moshe Mordechai to the Beis Avraham Yeshiva (Slonim), because in those days, one could see the מקום המקדש, the place of the Beis HaMikdash, from the roof of the yeshiva. When they arrived, it was already very late at night. All the bachurim of the yeshiva were sleeping by then. My father met one of the chashuve bachurim of the yeshiva, the

Gaon Reb Avraham Rubin Shlita, who is presently the Rav of Rechovos. My father said to Reb Avraham Rubin that his father, the Lelover Rebbe, was with him, and that his father's custom was to gaze at the מקום המקדש on this night, and they needed the key to the roof.

Reb Rubin replied that he doesn't have the key, and since all the bachurim are sleeping, he has no way of getting the key.

For my father, *kibud av ve'em* was paramount, and he didn't want to take "no" for an answer. But Reb Rubin repeated that there was nothing he could do, since everyone was sleeping.

Just then, a bachur came out of one of the rooms. My father immediately asked him whether he had the key to the roof. He did. He explained that the bachur who generally has the key wasn't in the yeshiva for a few days. Before he left the yeshiva, a few days earlier, this bachur emptied out his pockets. One of the items was a key. He gave the key to the bachur (whom they met now in the middle of the night), together with some other objects, and asked him to hold onto these items until he returned.

The bachur added that he couldn't fall asleep. He was turning from side to side, and just then, he decided to come out of his room.

The hashgachah of this story is amazing and startling. Hakadosh Baruch Hu prepared the needs for this tzaddik (and the same can occur with every Yid) so he can perform his custom. A few days earlier, before the Rebbe needed the key, the bachur in charge gave it to this bachur, who was still awake late at night. Hashem prepared the refuah before the makah. Salvation is always ready long before it is actually needed.

Hashem wants us to daven from the depths of our hearts, and when we do so, the salvation that was prepared beforehand will be revealed.

The Power of Tefillah

Pharaoh, the king of Mitzrayim, said (1:9) הִנֵּה עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב וְעֲצוּם מִמֶּנּוּ "Behold, the nation Bnei Yisrael are more numerous and stronger than we are."

The אריה דבי עילאי says that Pharaoh was saying that the Yidden are stronger than Hashem!⁷ Hashem makes a gezeirah, and the nation annuls it with their tefillos.

The Arvei Nachal (Pesach 2) proves this from the Bris Bein HaBesarim. Hashem said to Avraham that they will be enslaved for four hundred years, as it states (Bereishis 15:13) וְעַבְדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה "They will enslave them and oppress them, for four hundred years." But they davened to Hashem, as it states (2:23) וַיִּאָּחֲזוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן הָעֲבָדָה וַיִּזְעֻקוּ וַתַּעַל שְׁוַעֲתָם "Bnei Yisrael sighed from the labor, and they cried out, and their cry ascended to Hashem from the labor," and the decree was changed and amended. They were freed from Mitzrayim after 210 years of exile.

A bachur asked the Sar Shalom zt'l for a segulah for attaining emunah. The Sar Shalom replied that tefillah is the best segulah. When one davens and sees that his tefillos are answered, this strengthens his emunah.

The Ramban says something similar in this week's parashah. Moshe asked Hashem (3:13) הִנֵּה אֲנִי בָּא אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתִּי לָהֶם אֵלֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם "Behold I come to Bnei Yisrael and I say to them, 'The G-d of your fathers has sent me to you,' and

7. The words וְעֲצוּם מִמֶּנּוּ are similar to what the miraglim said (Bamidbar 13:31) כִּי הִזִּק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ "They are stronger than we." Rashi there writes that they meant that the nations in Eretz Yisrael are stronger than Hashem. Here, too, the Aryeh d'Bei Iloya says that Pharaoh meant that the Jewish nation was stronger than Hashem (מִמֶּנּוּ).

they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

The Ramban explains that they asked for proof that Hashem exists and watches over them. What can Moshe tell them that will prove that it is so?

Hashem replied (3:14) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶהְיֶה לָּךְ וְשָׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיךָ, "Hashem said to Moshe, "אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה.' He said, "So shall you say to Bnei Yisrael, 'אֲהִיָּה has sent me to you."

The Ramban explains that Hashem said they don't need proof other than that Hashem answers their tefillos. When they see that Hashem listens and answers their tefillah, they will know that Hashem is there and that He watches over them.

We quote the Ramban: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu replied, 'Why do you ask Me for My name? They don't need any other proof, that I will be with them when they have tzaros, than from the fact that when they call Me, I answer them. That is the greatest proof that Hashem is close to Bnei Yisrael whenever we call out to Him.'" The Ramban concludes, "This is a beautiful commentary."

The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 21:26) teaches that when the Yidden were at the Yam Suf, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to hear their tefillos one more time, וְלֹא הָיוּ רוֹצִין, but the nation didn't want to daven. What did Hashem do? He incited Pharaoh to chase after them as it states (Shemos 14:10) וּפְרַעֲהוֹ הִקְרִיב, 'Pharaoh drew near' and Bnei Yisrael immediately shouted out to Hashem."

What is the reason the nation didn't want to daven?

Also, the Midrash adds that Hashem wanted to hear their voice as they davened before in Mitzrayim.⁸ What was unique about their tefillos in Mitzrayim that Hashem wanted to hear those tefillos again?

The Beis Yisrael (ד"ה א"י ויצעקו Beshalach) asks these questions. He begins his answer with a lesson from the Rebbe of Kozmir zy'a: "When one doesn't have a complete *daas* (intellect, his mind isn't sharp at the moment to think too deeply) when he davens, he will pray like a child who can't yet say words, but he can call out and say אבא אבא, 'Father! Father!' A father has immense love and compassion for his child when he hears his child call him in this way. The same is with tefillah... The primary tefillah is when one calls out to Hashem like a child who doesn't know how to speak, and he calls out to Hashem and says אבא אבא, 'Father! Father!' This will certainly arouse Hashem's compassion."

The Beis Yisrael explains that when the Yidden were in Mitzrayim, they davened to Hashem in this simple mode. They called out to Hashem and shouted, "Tatte! Tatte! Father!" They didn't have *daas*, deep insights when they davened, as it states in sefarim (פ"ח שער חג המצות פ"א) that when the Yidden lived in Mitzrayim, their *daas* was in exile. So, their tefillos were simple cries to Hashem. All they could do was shout, "Tatte! Tatte!" and this aroused Hashem's compassion.

The Beis Yisrael teaches, "When they left Mitzrayim, there was redemption to their *daas*, and they were now able to daven with *kavanos* and immense intelligence. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to hear once again the mode of tefilla that He heard when they were in Mitzrayim when they shouted 'Father! Father!' But Klal Yisrael didn't want to daven in this mode. They wanted to daven with a lot of concentration and intelligence, כוונות ומוחין." This is why the Midrash says the nation didn't want to daven. This means that they didn't want to daven a simple tefillah. They were now on a higher level and wanted their tefillah to be in a higher form.

8. It states (Shir HaShirim 2:14) קוֹלְךָ הַשְׁמִיעֵנִי אֵת, "Let me hear your voice." The Midrash understands from קוֹלְךָ, "your voice," that Hashem longed to hear again the voice He heard in Mitzrayim.

But Hashem wanted to hear once again that special, simple tefillah. Therefore, Hashem brought Pharaoh to pursue them. The Yidden felt captured in the desert. The sea was before them, and the Mitzrim were behind them. Due to their fear, they couldn't daven with immense intellect, only with simplicity. They shouted, "Tatte! Tatte! Father!" Hakadosh Baruch Hu said that this was the voice He was waiting to hear.

After lighting Chanukah lecht, the Beis Avraham of Slonim zt'l would say chapter (וישב בפתר עליון, 91) of Tehillim. When he came to the words וְקִרְאֵנִי וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ, "When he calls Me, I will answer him," he said, "Hashem tells us that we should call out to Him and He will grant us our requests. If Hashem doesn't answer our requests, it is because we aren't calling out to Him." Even when we daven, we lack the recognition that no one can help us other than Hashem.

The Gemara (Brachos 32:) says, "If a person sees that his tefillos weren't answered, he should daven again..." It is explained in the name of the Chasid Yavetz that when a person loses something important to him, like his eyeglasses (or in our days, a good example will be when he loses his cell phone), he will look all over for it. But if he knows for certain that he lost it in a specific room, he won't look for it in another room. He will stay in that room and continue to search there. The same is true with tefillah. When a person knows that his salvation will come from tefillah, he won't search for other ways to attain his salvation.

If he davened once and the tefillos weren't answered, he will daven again and again because he knows that this is where he can find his salvation.

The Brisker Rav zt'l discussed this Gemara, that if one davened, and he wasn't answered, he should daven again, and he asked why he should daven again. If his tefillos weren't answered the first time, why should he think that his tefillos will be answered the second time he davens?

He answers that when he davens again, he shows that he believes in tefillah. That merit alone can make him worthy for his tefillos to be answered.

Some people plan to make ten types of hishtadlus to obtain their needs, and one of the ten is tefillah. When tefillah doesn't work, they try one of the other methods. The proper approach should be that one knows that tefillah is the key to his salvation, and there is no other way. Therefore, he will daven repeatedly until he attains his salvation.

Shovavim

The primary purifications of Shovavim are saying Tehillim and learning Torah.

Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (Rabba 18) states, "Come and see the great power of Torah study. It purifies Bnei Yisrael even if they worshipped *avodah zarah*."⁹

9. I heard the following from the gaon Reb Shlomo Sabresky Shlita, who lives in Beit Shemesh. (He previously resided in Gateshead):

He came to America during the year of תשל"ח to fundraise for the Gateshead Kollel. Some potential donors in New York declined to give him money. They claimed there were enough wealthy people in London who could support the kollel, and there was no reason the Americans should have to support it. They added, "What connection do we have with the kollel in Gateshead that we should support it?"

Reb Shlomo was hurt by these remarks and repeated them to Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l.

Reb Yaakov told him that both claims were foolish. "They say the people of London can support the kollel, but your coming here proves that their donations aren't enough. And to say they have no connection to the kollel in Gateshead is simply false. When talmidei chachamim study Torah, everyone in the world benefits from it, no matter how far they are.

Parashas Shemos starts with the words ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים, and the final letters spell תהלים. This hints that saying Tehillim purifies us in Shovavim.¹⁰

In this week's parashah, Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu (3:5) של נעליך מעל רגליך כי המקום הוא קודש, "Take your shoes off your feet, because the place upon which you stand, is holy land." The Chofetz Chaim (al HaTorah) explains, "In every place, and at every time, it is possible to serve Hashem. Only, we must ensure that our sins don't separate us from Hashem. As it states, 'Your sins separate you from Hashem.' Hashem told Moshe של נעליך מעל רגליך, you must remove the division between you and Hashem." The Chofetz Chaim writes that we can reach very high levels, even the levels of the early tzaddikim, but we must first remove the bad that separates us from Hashem.

This is the *avodah* of *Shovavim*: to remove the bad, the *tumah*, and the *aveiros* so that we can be pure before Hashem.

The Dubna Magid *zt'l* tells the following *mashal*:

A poor person, disgusted with his humiliating, torn, and worn clothing, saved up enough money to buy material and went to the tailor to make a suit.

When it was ready, the poor man put on the suit, thrilled that he finally had respectable clothing, but it didn't fit him. It was too small. He turned angrily to the tailor, "I told

you to make the suit to my size! This is too small for me."

The tailor replied, "The suit fits you fine, but you first have to remove your old clothing before you can put on the new one."

The *nimshal* is that we can attain very high spiritual levels, but first של נעליך, we have to remove the impure garments that are on us. We do so with Torah study, saying Tehillim, and most importantly, we cleanse ourselves through *teshuvah*.

Moshe asked Hashem (3:13-14) "If Bnei Yisrael ask for Your name, what should I tell them?"

Hashem replied, אהיה אשר אהיה.

The Yid HaKadosh (נחמד מזהב, ויצא) *zt'l* explains that Moshe's question was regarding the Yidden who fell to very low levels until they forgot Hashem's name. How can they do *teshuvah*?

Hashem answered אהיה. A Yid should say, "I will become better." Be prepared to improve your ways.

Hashem replies, "If you improve your ways, אשר אהיה, "I will be with you."

During Shovavim, making a kabbalah to become better is the first step. We add to that Torah study and Tehillim and become cleansed from our *aveiros*.

It states (1:8), ויקם מלך חדש על מצרים אשר לא ידע, "A new king arose over Mitzrayim who didn't know Yosef."

10. It states ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה את יעקב איש וביתו באו, "These are the names of Bnei Yisrael coming to Mitzrayim. Yaakov and his household came." *Coming* and *came* (הבאים - באו) are present and past tense. Why does the Torah change the tense in the same pasuk?

The Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe) answers that את יעקב איש וביתו באו implies that Yaakov took his household, together with the air and holy atmosphere of Eretz Yisrael, and transported it to Mitzrayim. They started a yeshiva in Mitzrayim, and it was as if they were living in Eretz Yisrael. However (1:7) it states וימת יוסף וכל וימת יוסף וכל, "Yosef, his brothers, and the entire generation were niftar, and the Jewish nation increased and multiplied...and they filled the land." The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Shemos 1*) explains that the Jewish nation filled the circuses and the theatres. They stopped studying Torah and were enjoying the Egyptian culture. Therefore, it states הבאים מצרימה, in the present tense. Previously, they weren't really living in Mitzrayim, but now they arrived.

Rashi (*Shemos* 1:8) writes, רב ושמואל, חד אמר חדש, "There's a machlokes between Rav and Shmuel: One says he was a new king. The other says that [it was the same, old king, but he is called new because] he decreed new *gezeiros* [evil decrees against the Jewish nation]."

The *Toras Chaim* (*Eiruvin* 53.) says that this machlokes results in a halachic נפקא מינה (difference) related to money matters. For example, someone pays for a new car, and the seller gives him an old, refurbished car. The buyer says, "This isn't what we agreed on. I agreed to buy a new car."

The seller says, "But it's just like new."

It will depend on the two explanations of "new." If מלך חדש is literal, then when someone asks for a new car, you must sell him a new car. But if מלך חדש means renewed, then a refurbished car can also be considered a new car.

Following the view that חדש means renewed, we can explain that when one does

teshuvah and changes his ways, he becomes "a new person."¹¹

Pharaoh decreed (5:7-8) לא תאספון לתת תבן לעם, "We will no longer provide straw to the nation to make bricks, as we did yesterday and the days before that. Instead, they will go around [the country] to gather straw." Rebbe Yaakov Yosef of Skver zt'l explained that Pharaoh's main goal was ילכו, that the Jewish nation would need to walk around the streets of Mitzrayim. He knew that if their eyes became contaminated, he would have the power to rule over them.

As it states (Yeshayah 27:6) יציץ ופרח ישראל, tzaddikim explain, יציץ, if one looks (where he shouldn't) ופרח ישראל, his Judaism flies out of him.

In contrast, it states (Yeshayah 49:18) שאי סביב עיניך וראי כולם נקבצו באו לך. The pasuk is saying שאי סביב עיניך, look away from forbidden sights, וראי כולם נקבצו באו לך, and you will see that the many malachim you created with these good deeds are going with you to protect you.¹²

11. The Chofetz Chaim zt'l taught that this is how teshuvah atones. When you do teshuvah, you aren't the same person who committed the aveirah. You are a new person because you've changed your ways.

12. Reb Avraham Genichovsky zt'l (Rosh Yeshiva of Tchebin) humbly shied away from being a sandek. Many of his students wanted to honor him with sandekaos, but he felt unworthy.

Shulchan Aruch (265:11) implies that being a sandek is mesugal for earning parnassah. (Tzaddikim say that if one lacks parnassah after serving as sandek, the segulah was used for other benefits. Spiritual success, for example, is also a form of wealth.)

Once, Reb Avraham needed a large sum of money and wanted the segulah of being a sandek. One of his students had a baby boy, so he informed him that if he wanted to honor him with sandekaos, he would accept it.

Less than a week later, Reb Avraham received ten thousand dollars. It was indeed mesugal for financial success.

When word got out that Reb Avraham began to accept sandekaos, he started getting many requests from people, inviting him to be sandek.

Reb Avraham didn't feel worthy of being a sandek, so he took upon himself a kabbalah so he would become more holy and fitting for this position. He took it upon himself not to read newspapers anymore. Obviously, until then, he only read Jewish newspapers, but he wanted to sanctify himself, and this was the kabbalah he took on.

He commented, "The second wealth (that he stopped reading newspapers) was greater wealth than the first wealth (ten thousand dollars)."