

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita*

Beha'aloscha



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Torah Wellsprings - Beha'aloscha

Bitachon

The parashah begins with the mitzvah of (8:2) בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת, "When you light the lamps [of the menorah]..." The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 15:6) says that the following pasuk in Tehillim is related to this pasuk. It states (Tehillim 34:10) יִרְאוּ אֶת ה' קְדָשָׁיו בִּי אֵין מִחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו, "Fear Hashem, His holy ones; for there is no lacking to those who fear Him."

What is the connection between these two pesukim?

The Tiferes Shmuel (Alexander) zt'l answers this question with the Gemara (Shabbos 22b), which tells us a wonder of the menorah. Its נר המערבי, western lamp, had the same amount of oil as all the other six lamps, but it burned much longer. All the lamps burned out by the morning, while the נר מערבי remained lit until the afternoon. The Tiferes Shmuel suggests that we can learn a lesson in parnassah from the western lamp. We discover that if Hashem desires it, one can employ the same level of effort as others do and yet earn so much more. A person thinks that he has to put in a lot of effort to earn a living or to become wealthy. The menorah

teaches us that hishtadlus isn't the primary factor that makes the difference; rather, it all depends on Hashem's blessings. Two people can perform the same level of hishtadlus, and one becomes far more successful than the other. Why? It is because this is Hashem's will. This was seen with the lamps of the menorah. They had the same amount of oil, but when it was Hashem's will, one lamp remained lit, far longer than the others.

The Tiferes Shmuel explains that when one knows this, he will fear Hashem. The Tiferes Shmuel gives an example of a person who comes to the beis medresh to daven, and sees that there isn't yet a minyan, so he davens by himself, *b'yechidus*. He doesn't want to wait until there is a minyan because he fears that he will have less time to work. But when one knows that Hashem gives parnassah, it will be easier for him to fear Hashem and do as he should.

Therefore, the Midrash says יִרְאוּ אֶת ה' קְדָשָׁיו we should fear Hashem, and we shouldn't overdo the hishtadlus, because בִּי אֵין מִחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו, nothing will be lacking. You will have everything you need.¹

1. The Gemara (Shabbos 77b) states, "Three things, the older they get, the stronger they become: They are fish, a snake, and a chazir." Why do Chazal tell us this? What difference does it make to us that fish, snakes, and chazeirim become stronger as they age? Iyun Yaakov (On Ein Yaakov) explains that these three animals eat very basic and even unnourishing foods. A fish consumes water, a snake eats earth, and a chazir eats garbage. They should be very weak, and as they age, they should become weaker. But they are stronger than other animals, and they only get stronger with time, unlike other animals that become increasingly weaker as they age. This teaches us that (Devarim 8:3) לִמְעַן הוֹדִיעְךָ בִּי לֹא עַל הַלֶּחֶם לִבְדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם בִּי עַל כֹּל מוֹצֵא בִּי ה' יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם, "So that He would make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but rather, by what comes forth from the mouth of Hashem does man live."

Reb Avraham Elimelech of Karlin zy'a repeated a story that his father-in-law, Reb Mordechai Yosef of Zlatapoli zy'a told. It was about a renowned, wealthy person in Russia. He dealt with a business broker who advised him on where to invest his money. This rich person had a custom of eating a lavish meal every day, at noon. He partook in many dishes, and the meal took a long time. No one, and nothing, could disturb him during his meal.

Once the broker came to him at lunchtime to discuss an excellent business opportunity worth millions. But it was lunchtime, and it was impossible to speak to him. The wealthy man wouldn't listen to a single word. The broker tried to draw his interest, but the rich person's mind was on his plate. A quarter hour later,

the broker tried again to get his attention, but the wealthy man wouldn't even acknowledge his presence. The broker said, "An opportunity like this one comes up once in many years. Maybe you should rush your meal a drop, before someone else grabs it?" But this didn't convince the wealthy person to shorten his meal. When he finally finished eating, it was too late. They heard that someone grabbed the business opportunity. It was no longer available.

The broker was overwhelmed with disappointment. He shouted at his client, "How did you allow yourself to lose this business deal?"

The wealthy man replied, "Didn't you see that I was in the middle of my lunch?"

The broker replied, "You are no fool. For a piece of meat, was it worth losing millions?"

The wealthy man replied, "The reason I work, the goal of my wealth, is so that I can enjoy a good meal in the afternoon, every day. So, when I sit down to a meal, the meat is before me. Why should I interrupt my meal to conduct business, so that I can earn meat? I am living the goal now; why would I stop to earn more money?"

The Rebbe taught an essential lesson from this story: The purpose of *parnassah* is so we can invest our minds and energy in Torah and *tefillah*. So, when one is in the midst of Torah and *tefillah*, does it make sense to interrupt to conduct business? Does it make sense to break your *קביעת עיתים לתורה* for *parnassah*? He does "business" and works, only so that he can focus on these moments of Torah and *tefillah* with *yishuv hadaas*. Does it make sense to interrupt these times to earn more money?

Reb Eliezer Pressman zt'l from Bnei Brak was a tremendous talmid chacham and tzaddik. He was niftar a few years ago. Throughout his entire life, his place was in the beis medresh, where he learned Torah. A wondrous story is told about him; the type of story that is said about tzaddikim from past generations.

One day, the phone rang in his home, and his rebbetzin answered it. On the line was the American Embassy of Tel Aviv. They informed her that her husband's parents had passed away, leaving behind a substantial inheritance. Reb Eliezer is the sole inheritor. He would need to come down to the embassy to sign a document, and then the large inheritance will be his. One signature is all that's required, and it will be taken care of.

The rebbetzin asked her husband, Reb Eliezer, what he thinks about this, and to her surprise, he answered, "In Tel Aviv, there are many challenges with *shemiras einayim*. I will not go there, not even to collect a large *yerushah*."

After hearing her husband's decision, she called back the embassy and told them that her husband is "very religious" and couldn't go to the embassy. She asked, "Is there any way we can receive the inheritance without signing the document?" They told her that this was impossible. She asked, "Perhaps the embassy can send someone to us, so my husband can sign?" she asked. They told her that this, too, is impossible. She also heard some people laughing in the background. They found her *temimusdige* suggestion humorous.

Now let us see what Hakadosh Baruch Hu did. A few days afterwards, someone from the embassy called her up again. This time, they had a request. A delegation of senators from the United States was coming to visit Eretz Yisrael, and they wanted to meet every type of resident living in Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, they want to meet a "very religious" Jew as well. The people in the embassy didn't know anyone from the very religious community, but then they remembered that this woman had told them her husband was "very religious." They asked her whether her husband could meet with the senators, as a sample of the "very religious" Jews in Eretz Yisrael.

She asked whether the Israeli ambassador would also be at the meeting, and they told her that he would. She asked, "Can he bring along the document of the inheritance, so my husband can sign it?" Once again, they said yes; they would arrange it.

She asked her husband for his opinion, and Reb Eliezer agreed to the meeting, as long as it would be *bein hasedarim*, at a time when he was at home, so as not to cause any *bitul Torah*.

The delegation arrived at their humble home at the time designated, accompanied by the ambassador who brought the document for him to sign. They also issued him a passport at that time.

Im Yirtzeh Hashem

In the desert, Hashem showed the nation when to travel, which direction to go, and where to camp. Hashem directed them with the ענני כבוד, clouds of glory, as it states (9:18-20) על פי ה' יסעו ועל פי ה' יחנו, "According to Hashem's word, Bnei Yisrael traveled, and by His word, they encamped."

The Shlah Hakodesh teaches that although today we don't have the ענני הכבוד guiding us, still, where and when we travel is in Hashem's hands. And this applies to everything we do. We think we make decisions on our own, but Hashem is directing us. The shidduchim we choose, the parnassah we work with, and millions of other details are all in Hashem's hands. על פי

ה', according to Hashem's will, that is what we do, and that is what occurs.

The Shlah Hakadosh (Derech Chaim Tochachas Mussar 12) writes, "This teaches us a lesson in mussar: With everything a person does, he should say *im yirtzeh Hashem* or *b'ezras Hashem*. For example, when traveling, he should say, 'I am traveling b'ezras Hashem yisbarach, and I plan to stop at place ploni b'ezras Hashem, im yirtzeh Hashem.' When he gets to that place, he should praise Hashem and say, 'B'ezras Hashem yisbarach (with Hashem's help) I came here, and I plan to travel on day ploni, b'ezras Hashem, im yirtzeh Hashem (with Hashem's help, if Hashem desires it).' When one does so, Hashem's name will always be on his lips."²

When the senators left his home, the people from the embassy told Reb Eliezer, "We want you to know that even if you were the son of the president of the United States, we wouldn't bring the documents to your home. We did something totally out of the ordinary. We never did this for anyone else."

It was as Chazal say, "Whoever accepts the yoke of heaven, the yoke of malchus is taken off of him." And Chazal say, "When one wants to be pure, Heaven helps him." And Chazal say, "the entire world was created to help the person who has yiras Shamayim." Hashem arranged everything for this man who guarded his eyes. Hashem sent a delegation of senators to Eretz Yisrael, all so that Reb Eliezer would be able to sign the document and receive his inheritance. The rebbetzin's request that the ambassador come to them, which at first sounded like a great joke, ultimately came to pass.

2. In the year 5685, the Chofetz Chaim informed his community in Radin that he was going to Eretz Yisrael. He was, in a sense, taking leave from his community. When he finished the drashah, one of the baalabatim came over and asked, "Why didn't you say 'Im yirtzeh Hashem'?"

Motzei Shabbos, the Chofetz Chaim's rebbetzin fell ill, and they couldn't travel.

(This story was told by Reb Yechezkel Abramsky zt'l, who heard it from Reb Isser Zalman Melzer zt'l.)

A chassid once told the Rebbe of Kosov zt'l that he would be in Zlatipola for Shabbos. The Rebbe commented, "Do you really think you'll be in Zlatipola?"

The chasid set out to Zlatipola but encountered many difficulties and obstacles and had to return to Kosov. The chassid asked the Rebbe, "If the Rebbe knew I wouldn't be in Zlatipola, why didn't you tell me not to go?"

The Rebbe replied, "I wasn't sure you wouldn't get to Zlatipola. But I heard how certain you were that you'll be there, and you didn't even say *im yirtzeh Hashem*, so I wondered if you would succeed."

The Chida quotes the following story (Chadrei Beten; *sefer Eliyahu HaNavi*; Otzar HaMidrashim), which teaches the importance of always saying, "*im yirtzeh Hashem*."

There was once a wealthy person who was generous with his money and helped the poor, but he thought he earned his wealth on his own.

One day, he was going to the marketplace to buy oxen. Eliyahu HaNavi appeared to him disguised as a merchant. [Apparently, although his emunah was lacking, due to his acts of chesed, he merited to see Eliyahu HaNavi, who came to teach him a lesson in emunah.]

The Shlah Hakadosh's lesson is a practice to get accustomed to. We should say 'b'ezras Hashem' and 'im yirtzeh Hashem' with everything we do. Hashem's name should always be on our lips, and the awareness that we can't do anything without Hashem's aid should always be in our hearts.

Working Hard

It states (8:4) וְזֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמְנוֹרָה מִקֶּשֶׁה זָהָב עַד יִרְכָּה עַד פְּרָחָה מִקֶּשֶׁה הוּא כְּמִרְאָה אֲשֶׁר הָרָאָה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה בְּנֵי עֲשָׂה אֶת הַמְנוֹרָה. This pasuk teaches us how the menorah

should be made from one piece of gold. We wonder why this pasuk is written in this week's parashah. This parashah discusses lighting the menorah, and not its construction. The details of how to build the menorah are discussed in parashas Teruma, so why is this pasuk written here, in parashas Behaloscha?

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* answers that the Torah wants us to know that the light of the menorah is a result of hard work. The light of the menorah represents the spiritual

Eliyahu asked, "Where are you going?"

"To buy oxen."

"Say that you are going to buy oxen אם ירצה ה' if Hashem wills it."

"Why should I say that? I have money, and I'm going to the market, so I'll buy oxen. I don't need Hashem's help. If I didn't have money, I would say *im yirtzeh Hashem*. But I am wealthy and can buy the oxen on my own. "

The wealthy man continued to the market, not realizing that he had dropped his wallet. Eliyahu picked up the wallet and put it on a stone in the forest.

It took the merchant quite some time to find the oxen he wanted to buy. When he was ready to pay, he discovered that he had lost his wallet. He returned home disappointed and without the oxen.

Sometime later, he took another pouch of money and set off to the marketplace. Once again, he met up with Eliyahu HaNavi. This time, Eliyahu appeared to him like an elderly person. Eliyahu asked him, "Where are you going?"

The wealthy man answered that he was going to buy oxen. Eliyahu HaNavi told him, "You won't be able to buy oxen if it isn't Hashem's will. Say *im yirtzeh Hashem*!" But the man refused. He didn't think he needed Hashem's help to buy oxen.

Eliyahu caused the man to fall asleep, then took the man's money pouch and placed it on the stone in the forest, next to where the first bundle of money lay.

The man awoke, and when he saw the money was gone, he again went home disappointed.

At home, he thought over what had occurred and realized he was being punished for refusing to say *im yirtzeh Hashem*. He made a kabbalah that, from now on, he would say, *im yirtzeh Hashem*.

He set off to the market to buy oxen a third time. Before he reached the market, he met Eliyahu HaNavi. This time, Eliyahu appeared to him like a young lad seeking work. He engaged the wealthy merchant in conversation, and when the lad heard that he was going to buy oxen, he said, "If you need help bringing the oxen home, you can hire me."

The wealthy man replied, "Im yirtzeh Hashem; if Hashem helps me and I buy oxen, I will hire you."

With almost no effort, the wealthy merchant found very good oxen at an excellent price. He hired the lad to help him bring the oxen back to his home. As they walked, the oxen suddenly ran into the forest. The merchant chased after them. The oxen stopped next to the stone with his money. The merchant praised Hashem joyously. The merchant and the lad arrived at his home, and then the lad suddenly disappeared. The merchant understood that this was Eliyahu HaNavi and that Hashem's hashgachah was involved in everything that had transpired.

light one can experience when involved in Torah and avodas Hashem. The Torah tells us that this light can be attained when one works hard and invests all his efforts in avodas Hashem. This is because it states in the pasuk ...מקשה זהב... מקשה היא... Rashi explains that מקשה means "hammered," since the menorah was made from one piece of gold and hammered into shape.

מקשה can also be translated to mean questions. Chazal (*Bamidbar Rabba* 15:10) say, נתקשה, משה במעשה המנורה, "Moshe didn't understand how the menorah should be made..." He toiled to understand how the menorah should be made but didn't succeed. Hashem told Moshe to throw the block of gold into a fire, and the menorah came out, ready-made. As Rashi writes (8:4), על ידי הקב"ה נעשית מעליה, "The menorah was made by itself, by Hakadosh Baruch Hu."

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* explains that Moshe's toil to understand the menorah brought out its light because the light of *avodas Hashem* emerges from struggles and toil.

Therefore, we shouldn't be frightened by the toil we encounter in *avodas Hashem* because these hardships are the gateway to finding the unlimited pleasurable, spiritual light that is there.³

Tefillah

When the Minchas Elazar *zt'l* was once in a hospital in Budapest, he asked for permission to daven with a minyan on Shabbos. One of the doctors knew the Rebbe well and understood that he was a holy man. He said to the Rebbe, "You can daven here with a minyan on Shabbos. I take on the responsibility for the decision. But this is solely on condition that you daven here in silence, so you don't disturb the other patients."

A small minyan convened in the hospital room while keeping their promise to daven silently. The Rebbe also tried to daven in silence, but when he came to the words יאמרו גאולי ה' אֶשְׁרֵךְ גִּאֲלֶם מִיַּד צָר... וַיִּצְעֲקוּ אֵל (Tehillim 107) he (said at the beginning of Minchah on erev Shabbos) he couldn't contain his hislahavus, and he shouted the words with tears running down his face. The doctor who gave permission heard the shout and rushed to the Rebbe's room and pleaded that the Rebbe keep his promise. He explained that if any problems arose, he would be held responsible and face consequences.

After the tefillah, the doctor said to the Rebbe, "Why didn't you keep the agreement, not to daven loudly?"

3. There was a soldier in Czar Nicholas's army who would spend a lot of time in the bar. When his money ran out, he gave the bartender his weapons as collateral and said, "When I have money, I will pay you and take back my weapons." But in the meantime, the weapons were at the bar.

The problem arose when Czar Nicholas visited the base to check on the soldiers. This soldier carried a large bag, as though it contained his weapon. This wasn't suspicious because many soldiers held their weapons in bags. Overall, the Czar was pleased with the order and discipline he saw in the camp, but then he called over this soldier and asked him to open his bag. It was filled with straw. He was severely punished.

Rebbe Asher of Stolin *zy'a* repeated this story and asked how Czar Nicholai knew to suspect this soldier. Other soldiers were carrying their bags, but this soldier aroused his suspicion. Why?

The answer is that the Czar noticed the ease with which the soldier was carrying his bag. The exertion involved in carrying a heavy sack filled with ammunition was absent, which gave away the secret.

Rebbe Asher of Stolin said that we learn a lesson in *avodas Hashem* from this story. *Avodas Hashem* requires effort and exertion. If it is too easy, something is off.

The Minchas Elazar replied, "I will tell you the truth. Initially, I thought that being silent was a hospital rule, so I agreed to abide by it. However, I discovered that there is no such rule. Last night, shortly after I fell asleep, I was awoken by the shouts of a patient in the hospital. I couldn't sleep the entire night because of him. I discovered that it is ok to shout in the hospital."

The doctor smiled and said, "But you are a wise Rabbi. Why do you say something so foolish? That person has a terrible disease, all his bones are broken, and he shouted bitterly out of pain. Generally, there is quiet in the hospital."

The Rebbe replied, "You are truly a great doctor, and you studied from great professors. They taught you to understand the pain of broken hands and feet. But what do you know about the broken heart of a Jewish person? You will never understand the pain that a Yid has when he waits close to two thousand years for the geulah, and he suffers the hardships of galus, which become worse each day. My shouts also came from an intense pain, from a very broken heart. The patient last night couldn't control himself, and I also couldn't control myself. The shouts emerged on their own."

Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer (Imrei Pinchas Hashalem, Bo) zt'l teaches: The Zohar states that every day, there is a moment when the Or HaGanuz, the concealed light, is revealed, and all tefillos said at that time are answered. Therefore, the Midrash (Devarim Rabba 2:12) states that a person should daven

continuously, and if his tefillos weren't yet answered, he should daven another time. He should daven again and again, until his tefillos are answered. This is the meaning of the words קוה אל ה', חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה'. Keep davening, even a hundred times. The explanation is that if one davens all the time, perhaps he will merit to say one tefillah at the time that the Or HaGanuz shines, and then the tefillah will be answered. We don't know the time that the Or HaGanuz shines.

Nevertheless, he writes, there is an assumption (repeated in the name of the Baal Shem Tov zy'a) that the Or HaGanuz shines before the netz hachamah. Everyone can ask their requests at that time.

Another time the Or HaGanuz shines is in Parashas Bahaloscha. The Imrei Pinchas (Bahaloscha) writes, "In parashas Bahaloscha, the concept of the Or HaGanuz is aroused." So, we can deduce that the entire week before this Shabbos is also a special time for the tefillos to be answered.

The Vilna Gaon zt'l reveals yet another opportunity for us to benefit from the Or Haganuz. He writes in a letter, "Every moment a person closes his mouth, he merits the Or HaGanuz, which no malach or creation can measure." This is a source for the concept that when a person is מעביר על מדותיו, he doesn't answer back when there is a machlokes, he has the power of tefillah, and all of his brachos and tefilos that he says at this time will be answered. The Or HaGanuz shines at this time, and he has the power of tefillah.⁴

4. I heard the following story from the *baal hamaaseh*, a tzaddik and a respected individual. He told me the following:

We have family in Vienna, and this year (תשפ"ה) I traveled with my family to Vienna, to be with them for Pesach. Immediately after yom tov, we traveled to kivrei tzaddikim in the area, and then we traveled to Kerestir. We arrived in Kerestir late at night. We immediately went to daven at the kever, and then we headed to the hotel. It was already passed midnight, and we had to get up early to be in time for Shacharis, which we saw on a sign, begins at 8:00.

After Shacharis and breakfast, we went back to the tzion to daven, and then we traveled to Uhel, to the kever of the Yismach Moshe zy'a.

Small Deeds, Great Deeds

It states (12:15) וַתִּסָּגֵר מִרְיָם מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, וְהָעָם לֹא נָסַע עַד הָאֶסָּף מִרְיָם, "Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days [when she had tzaraas]. The nation did not travel until Miriam had been readmitted to the camp."

Rashi writes, "Hashem showed her this honor because of the short moment that she waited for Moshe when he was cast into the Nile river, as it says (Shemos 2:4), וַתֵּצֵב אַחֲוֹתוֹ, מֵרְחוֹק לִדְעָה מָה יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ, 'His sister stood at a distance to see what would become of him.'"

Darkei Musar (Shemos) asks that, as it appears to us, Miriam did something that any sister would do. If a brother is thrown into the Nile, a sister will stand nearby to see what will happen to him. Why was Miriam rewarded for this apparently "average" deed that any sister would do? Why was she rewarded that the entire nation waited for seven days?

He answers, "Indeed, the deed that Miriam did was small, but the benefit that came from it was very great. This is because Moshe didn't want to nurse from an Egyptian

woman. If Miriam weren't there, Moshe would die from hunger, chas veshalom. The redemption of Bnei Yisrael was dependent on Miriam being there. Therefore, although the deed wasn't so great, since the results of this deed were enormous, she merited a reward that all Yisrael waited for her. This is a great lesson for each person, to be cautious with his small deeds, because through it, something great might emerge."

In addition, every small deed is truly very great. As the Chovas HaLevavos (Cheshbon HaNefesh 5) writes, "Don't consider any good thing you do for Hashem – even a word or a look – to be small, because what is small in your eyes is great in Hashem's eyes. The best example of this is the sun's rays that move one *amah* on earth, and in the sky, it has moved enormous distances."

Also, from a small deed, one can reach very high levels. Therefore, there really aren't "small deeds." But even if there were "small deeds", Hashem takes into account the good that comes from the deed he did. In this instance, Miriam waited for Moshe,

I am a kohen, so I davened in the place designated for kohanim. When I arrived, I met someone I know, a tzaddik and a chacham, who is also a kohen. (He is also my son's magid shiur). When I arrived, he was leaving, and we greeted one another. He said, "We meet in good places."

He told me, "My son lives in Vienna, but I will be going to Kerestir until Thursday (Parashas Shemini, 26th of Nisan).

We headed back to Vienna, a six-hour drive. When we opened our bags, one of my sons shouted that he didn't have his tefillin with him.

After thinking for a moment, we realized that he must have left the tefillin in the beis medresh in Kerestir. Then I remembered that the magid shiur is there. It was late at night, so I didn't call him until the next morning. When I called him in the morning, he said, "I am right now in the beis medresh and the tefillin is right next to me."

We saw Hashem's wonders. If we had arrived at the Yismach Moshe's kever a drop later, I wouldn't have met with the magid shiur, and I wouldn't know that he was there.

Another hashgachah was that before we left Vienna (for our trip to kivrei tzaddikim), we heard someone ask whether there was a tefillin gemach for tefillin in Vienna. At the time, we couldn't imagine we would need that gemach, but after hearing the answer, my son knew where to go to get tefillin until his tefillin arrived from Kerestir. When we went to pick up the tefillin from the gemach, we saw that the gmach is l'iluy nishmas Reb Shayah b'Reb Moshe of Kerestir. The tzaddik Reb Shayeles takes care of his guests. Everything worked out wondrously.

and this resulted in the salvation of all of Klal Yisrael.

We say in the first brachah of Shemonah Esrei קוֹנֵה הַכֹּל. Toras Avos writes in the name of Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin zt'l that this means that Hashem buys and accepts every good deed we do. Even when the good deed doesn't appear so wonderful, and it might even appear minor and trivial, Hashem is קוֹנֵה הַכֹּל accepts and acquires every good deed we do. Hashem is pleased with all our achievements, both large and small.

It states (Shir HaShirim 4:9) לִבִּי בְּתִי... בָּאֲחַת מְעִינִיךְ, "You have captivated my heart... with one of your eyes." This hints to us that even for guarding one eye, this also makes an immense nachas ruach for Hashem. It isn't perfect, but Hashem is קוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, accepts and treasures every good deed we do.

It states in last week's parashah that the nesil'im donated oxen to the mishkan. Hashem told Moshe to accept the oxen, and (7:5) וְהָיוּ לְעֹבֵד אֶת עֲבֹדַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, "they will be used in the service [of the Mishkan]," such as to carry the walls of the Mishkan when traveling in the desert. The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 12:18) says that וְהָיוּ means that they existed forever. נתן להם הויה שיהיו קיימים לעולם, "They were given existence so that they will survive forever." The *Tana'im* have various opinions on how long they existed. One view is that they were brought as korbanos in the mishkan in Gilgal, Nov, or in Givon. Another opinion is that Shlomo HaMelech sacrificed these animals in the Beis

HaMikdash (five hundred years later). Reb Meir says, "Until today, the calves and oxen are still in existence. They never received a blemish (מום), they never became old, and they never broke."

The Midrash concludes with a kal v'chomer: "If the calves that had some connection with the Mishkan were given existence to live forever, Yisrael, who connect themselves to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, will certainly survive. As it states (Devarim 4:4) וְאַתֶּם יְהוָה, 'You who cleave to Hashem your G-d are alive, all of you, this day.'"

Let us think about this. The animals performed a service for the Mishkan for a short time, and in this merit, they were blessed with very long lives and good health. Certainly, how great will be the reward of the people who do Hashem's service, even if it is for a short time, and even if the service is performed without knowledge (similar to the animals who didn't know what they were doing). This is because every good deed that a Yid does, the rewards, the kedushah, and the specialness of the deed are endless.⁵

Don't Complain

It states (Bamidbar 11:1) וַיְהִי הָעָם מְמַתְּאֲנִים רַע בְּאַזְנֵי יְהוָה, "The nation took to seeking complaints; it was bad in Hashem's ears." There are different explanations as to what they were complaining about.

Rashi writes that the Jewish nation said, "Woe to us! We have been trudging on the

5. The mashgiach, Reb Shlomo Wolbe zt'l, told a wonderful mashal to help us appreciate the greatness of a small, good deed. During a war, military planes entering enemy territory fly at a very low altitude to avoid detection by the other country's radar system. The radar picks up planes that fly high but can't detect low-flying planes.

The yetzer hara also has a radar system. When a Yid endeavors to do a great mitzvah, the yetzer hara immediately becomes aware of this, and tries to stop him. However, when a person performs a "small deed," the yetzer hara is unaware of it, and it doesn't appear on its radar; therefore, the yetzer hara won't stop him.

Therefore, it is worthwhile to take on "small" kabbalos because those are easier to keep and fly under the radar.

way for so long. We traveled for three days without rest." וַיַּחַר אַפּוֹ Hashem was angry, and replied, "My intention was for your benefit so that you will enter Eretz Yisrael immediately." They were complaining, but they didn't realize that it was for their good.

They were punished for complaining and for not trusting in Hashem, as it states וַתִּבָּרַח אֵשׁ ה' וַתֹּאכַל בִּקְצֵה הַמַּחֲנֶה, "A fire of Hashem burnt against them, and it consumed at the edge of the camp."

Just two pesukim later, the nation is complaining again. This time, they are complaining about the manna (11:4): מִי יֵאָכְלֵנוּ בָּשָׂר, זָכַרְנוּ אֶת הַדָּגָה אֲשֶׁר נֹאכַל בַּמִּיָּדָיִם הַנֶּחֱמָם אֶת הַקִּשְׁאִים וְאֶת הָאֲבִטְחִים וְאֶת הַחֲצִיר וְאֶת הַבָּצְלִים וְאֶת הַשּׁוּמִיִּם, וְעַתָּה נִפְשָׁנוּ וְיִבֶּשֶׂה אֵין כָּל בְּלִתִּי אֵל הַמֶּן עֵינֵינוּ "Who will feed us meat? We remember the fish that we ate in Mitzrayim, free of charge; the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic, but now our life is parched, there is nothing; we have

nothing to anticipate but the manna." Once again, they shouldn't have complained, as the Torah elaborates on how good the manna was. Rashi writes (11:7) "See, all you who inhabit the world what my children are complaining about. The manna is excellent in so many ways!"

They were punished for complaining, as it states (11:33) הַבָּשָׂר עוֹדְנוּ בֵּין שִׁנֵיהֶם טָרָם יָפְרַת וְאָף ה' "The meat [of slav] was still between their teeth, not yet chewed, when the wrath of Hashem flared against the people. Hashem struck a very mighty blow against the nation."

The Torah is eternal, its teachings are for every generation and every Yid. We learn from this section of the Torah that we shouldn't complain. One shouldn't say, "Why did Hashem do this to me?" He must know that everything that Hashem does is for the good.⁶

6. A chashuver yungerman asked his friend to lend him three thousand shekels. His friend told him that he couldn't help him.

Later that night, at 3:00 am, this man came to the beis medresh where he studies Torah every day. When he arrived in the beis medresh, he saw that the person in charge of the beis medresh was already there, so he approached him and asked for a three-thousand-shekel loan. The person, too, replied that he couldn't help. The yungerman went to his seat, disappointed. This was the second time he asked for a loan and was turned down.

This beis medresh has cameras. Everything that happens in the beis medresh can be seen. Also, the wealthy person who donated the beis medresh has access to these cameras, and from his home in chutz le'aretz, he often watches what is happening in the beis medresh. This time, he saw someone approach the person in charge of the beis medresh, ask for something, and he could tell that the person in charge said that he couldn't help him. So, he immediately called up the person in charge of the beis medresh and said, "I saw someone ask you for something and you couldn't help him. What was that all about?"

The person in charge told him what had occurred. The wealthy man compassionately told him, "Give him ten thousand shekels from my account. Give it to him as a gift, not as a loan."

The next day, the yungerman met his friend and told him, "Because you didn't lend me the money, I received ten thousand shekels!"

He learned that what he thought was a problem was for his good.

(Another lesson is that a person is learning at night, and doesn't know that someone is watching him. But Hashem is watching from heaven. He sees everything the person does.)

A person is driving, and there are two routes he can take to get to his destination. He looks at one road, and sees it is clear. He glances over to the other road, and he sees a traffic jam. Which route should he take? There is no question. It is obvious he should take the road that is clear of traffic. But his GPS tells him to take the congested road! This is because the GPS looks from above and benefits from a broad, clear

The Ibn Ezra says that מְתַאֲנִיִּים means thoughts and speech of sin; however, the Torah doesn't specify exactly what those forbidden thoughts and speech were. The Ramban writes, "Reb Avraham (Ibn Ezra) says that מְתַאֲנִיִּים comes from the word אָוֶן, as it says in (Yirmiyahu 4:14) מְהִשְׁבוֹת אוֹנֶה, "Iniquitous thoughts". This means that the nation was speaking words of אָוֶן, sin. But this explanation isn't correct, because why does the Torah conceal the sin, and not tell us what they did wrong, as the Torah does in other places? In my opinion, the correct explanation is that they had just left Har Sinai, which is near civilization, and were now entering the great and awesome desert. This was their first trip into the desert, and they were worried: "What will we do? How will we live in this desert? What will we eat and drink? How will we tolerate the hardships and the afflictions? When will we leave this place?"

"According to this explanation, מְתַאֲנִיִּים is similar to the pasuk (Eichah 3:39) מִהָיְתָה יְתָאוֹן אָדָם חַי

גבר על חטאיו, 'Why should a living man mope?...'. It is when a person is in pain and he pities himself. Another example is (Bereishis 35:18) בֶּן אוֹנִי, which means the son of my distress..."

The Ramban writes, "The Torah tells their aveirah. They were מְתַאֲנִיִּים, they were speaking from their bitter souls, as those who have pain do, and this was רַע בְּעֵינֵי ה', bad in Hashem's eyes, because they should have followed Hashem with joy and with a good heart, due to all the good Hashem had given them. But they were going like they were forced, and they were moaning and complaining about their lot."

The Ramban writes, "It states again (11:4) וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וַיִּבְכוּ גַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, 'Then even Bnei Yisrael once again began to cry [about the manna]. Their first sin was their complaining about not having all their pleasures in the desert, and then they complained a second time. They didn't learn a lesson from the fire that burned in them.'"⁷

view. In the end, he will reach his destination quicker if he takes the more congested route. There will be traffic for a few minutes, and then it will open up. The other route will take longer.

The lesson is that a person cannot see the entire picture, and sometimes he sees that the road (or roads) in front of him are all blocked. He doesn't see a way out. He doesn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. But he must know that the road that seems like a dead end might be the road that will lead to his salvation.

7. It states (11:5-6) וַיִּזְכְּרוּ אֶת הַדָּגָה אֲשֶׁר נֹאכַל בְּמִצְרַיִם הַזֶּה אֶת הַקִּשְׁאִים וְאֶת הָאֲבִטָּחִים וְאֶת הַחֲצִיר וְאֶת הַבָּצְלִים וְאֶת הַשּׁוּמִיּוֹת, וְעַתָּה נִפְשָׁנוּ יִבְשָׁה אֵין, "We remember the fish that we ate in Mitzrayim, free of charge; the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic, but now our life is parched, there is nothing; we have nothing to anticipate but the manna."

But why were they complaining? The manna tasted like any food they imagined. So, they could imagine these foods... and they would taste them in the manna! (The truth is, Rashi on this pasuk, and the Gemara Yomah 75a says that the manna wouldn't taste like the foods mentioned above. But we are writing this in the path of דרוש). This illustrates how much people dislike thinking. It is easier to complain and to cry than to think for a moment about the taste of fish, cucumbers, etc.

In the days of the Arizal, there was a man who suffered a lot from his wife. She had very bad middos and made his life miserable. This man told the Arizal about the tzaros he suffers from his wife. The Arizal replied, "In a previous gilgul, it was the opposite. You caused her a great deal of distress. Therefore, this time around, she is causing you tzaros. This will atone for your aveiros of the past, it will save you from Gehinnom. Every distress you go through cleanses you immensely, so you won't have to go to Gehinnom."

When the man understood what was really going on, he learned to become happy with his portion, and each time his wife caused him trouble, he became even happier. He began to have hakaras hatov to his wife, because she was helping him become cleansed from his aveiros.

His wife was shocked by the change she noticed in her husband and asked him about it. He didn't want

17th Sivan – Yahrtzeit of Reb Aharon Karliner

The 17th of Sivan is the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Aharon of Karlin *zt'l*, the Beis Aharon. In honor of the *yahrtzeit*, we will share some stories about this great *tzaddik*, specifically focusing on his joy.

One of Beis Aharon's outstanding traits was *simchah*. The Rebbe of Kozmir (and other *tzaddikim*) called him the *freilechen* *tzaddik* because he was always happy. People thought he was a happy person by nature, but the Yesod HaAvodah of Slonim *zy'a* said that the Beis Aharon's happiness was a result of his *hischazkus*. (He trained himself to be happy. He worked on himself to always be satisfied.)

Once, the Beis Aharon rebuked his son for not being happy. His son asked, "Why do you rebuke me specifically for this? I have other faults, and you never rebuke me over those matters!"

His father, the Beis Aharon, replied, "You have *yiras Shamayim*, and on your own, I know that you will improve in the areas that need improvement. However, you think that being sad isn't so severe... That's why I must teach you the importance of always being happy."

An individual with a sad disposition came to join the Stoliner chasidus. The Beis Aharon told him the following *mashal*:

A family was traveling to a chasunah when they met a poor man walking along

to tell her. But she pestered him to reveal what happened, to explain his positive reaction to her trouble, so he told her what he heard from the Arizal. He explained to her that all the suffering she causes him is for his benefit, because it cleanses him from his *aveiros*.

Hearing that, she declared, "I refuse to help save you from Gehinom," and she became kind to him.

The man returned to the Arizal and cried before him that his wife had become good to him. "All my sufferings ended. What will save me from Gehinnom now?"

The Arizal replied, "You received your *kaparah* already; now everything will be good for you."

The explanation is as Chazal (Brachos 62a) say *סמא דיסורא קבילי*, a cure for *yesurim* is to accept them. When one accepts his *yesurim*, his *kaparah* is complete, and the *yesurim* can now leave him. He accepted his *yesurim*, and therefore, shortly afterwards, he won't need them anymore.

This story is also a reminder that when we think something is bad, it is really for the good, only we don't see the complete picture. All we can do is rely on Hashem Who is always leading us in the best way.

A young child was crying at the bus station. Someone came by and asked him why he was crying. The child said that he didn't have the money to buy a bus ticket. The man had *rachmanus* on him and gave him money for the bus. The child went to buy a ticket and returned with the ticket in his hand, but he was still crying.

"Why are you crying now?" the man asked.

The child replied, "When other people come to the clerk to buy a bus ticket, he gives them a ticket, and he gives them change as well. But the clerk only gave me a ticket, and he didn't give me change!" (This was because he paid the exact rate).

This story serves as a reminder that people often cry and lose sight of all the good they have. A *gadol* mentioned that you will never read in the newspaper, "Ten thousand people traveled on the highway today, and they all returned home safe and sound." And they don't write, "Fifty thousand people went to work today, and they all earned *parnassah*." The newspaper focuses only on the one percent, on the problems, while ignoring all the good. People are the same. They focus on what they lack, their issues. But it should be the opposite. We should focus on the good we have.

the side of the road. The man asked them if he could ride along with them. The head of the family told him, "We are traveling to a chasunah; the kallah is in the wagon, and we are all very happy. If you can be happy with us, you can join us. But if you're sad, we don't want you on the wagon. You will ruin the joyous atmosphere." The Beis Aharon turned to the chasid and said, "We have a happy chasidus. You can join us if you want, but only if you will be happy together with us."

The Beis Aharon zy"a once stood before the amud to daven and said to himself: "I am a grandson [of tzaddikim], but I am a simple person. What connection do I have with my holy grandfathers?"

He thought about this for a few moments and then said: "But I *am* a grandson, so I will daven *liluy nishmas* my grandfather," and then the Beis Aharon began the tefillah.

The Beis Aharon's grandson, Rebbe Avraham Elimelech of Karlin zy"a said: This is a lesson in serving Hashem. On the one hand, one should feel broken and humble because of his sins and imperfections, but on the other hand, one should strengthen himself and say: "I am a ben Melech [a child of Hashem], and therefore I have tremendous value."

The Gemara (*Megillah* 28.) says שמעתתא בעי צלילתא. Literally, this means, "To learn Torah, one needs a clear mind." צלילתא can also mean tefillah. The Beis Aharon taught שמעתתא בעי צלילתא, to succeed in Torah, one needs to daven properly, and to succeed in tefillah, one needs to learn well. One influences the other.

Chasidim from Poland came to the Beis Aharon for a *yom tov*. When they were ready to leave, the Beis Aharon told them, "Yidden in Poland love to learn Torah, and so do we. The difference is that we explain the Gemara (*Megillah*) שמעתתא בעי צלילתא, to mean that for success in Torah, one needs to daven well. Also, to daven well, one needs to learn Torah."

The Sadigura Rebbe zt'l was a son-in-law of the Beis Aharon. The Sadigura chasidim had a custom to gather and discuss chasidus and avodas Hashem. To raise money for the refreshments of their gatherings, the Sadigura Rebbe would give them a coin that he blessed, to be a segulah for protection and success, and the chassidim would auction off the coin to the highest bidder.

Once, there were wealthy people among the bidders, and the coin sold for a large sum. The chassidim debated what to do with the money. Should it all be used for their chassidic gatherings, or should they designate some of the money for other needs, since it was a lot? They asked their Rebbe's father-in-law, the Beis Aharon zt'l. He replied, "There is nothing more special than when Yidden gather in friendship to speak words of Torah and *emunah*. So I don't think you should use the money for any other cause."

Once, at a *tisch*, the Beis Aharon sent a chassid outdoors to report back what he saw. The chassid returned and said, "I saw two drunkards walking together. One of them said to the other one: 'Let's hold on to each other so that we won't fall.'" The Beis Aharon said, "Did you hear what he said? When Yidden hold on and support one another, they won't fall from their spiritual levels."

Chazal say כל הגדול מחברו יצרו גדול ממנו, "Whoever is greater, has a greater *yetzer hara*." The Beis Aharon read it to mean, כל הגדול, whoever is great in Torah and *avodas Hashem*, מחברו, it is because he has friends. יצרו גדול, but if one has a great *yetzer hara*, ממנו, it is because he is alone.

The Beis Aharon taught his *chassidim* to daven loudly, passionately, and slowly. One Shabbos, a visiting Rav heard the Beis Aharon begin *Baruch She'amar*, but didn't hear him finish it. The Rav assumed that the custom in this *beis medresh* was that the *chazan* didn't end each piece, so the Rav continued to daven on his own. When he reached *Yishtabach*, he heard the Rebbe

shout, in the renowned Stoliner tune, יחיד חי העולמים... So slow and passionate were their *tefillos*.

When the Beis Aharon was niftar, his son-in-law, the Sadigura Rebbe, said, "The יחיד חי העולמים, the one Hashem, remains the

same, but the way my father-in-law said those words won't be heard again until Moshiach comes."

Zechuso yegen aleinu, may his merit be a protection for us, amen.