

# Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts  
from  
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Vaeira



בס"ד

# Torah WELLSPRINGS

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# Torah Wellsprings

## Vaeira

### Constantly Reviewing Emunah

Emunah is one of the מצוות תדירות, which means it is from the mitzvos that one should be performing 24/7, every moment of one's life. His mind should always be on emunah. As the Sefer HaChinuch writes (introduction), "The obligation is constant. One shouldn't stop, not even one minute of his life."

Also, when the Chinuch discusses the mitzvah of

emunah (Mitzvah 25), he writes, "A person's entire life, he is obligated to have in his mind this thought."

If a person doesn't think thoughts of emunah every moment of the day, he is advised to think about his emunah in Hashem at least once a day and gradually grow from there.<sup>1</sup>

The Chofetz Chaim (Shemiras HaLashon, Chasimas HaSefer ch.2) discusses the mitzvah of loving Hashem and writes, "A person should think

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1. A person once dreamed that he saw Hashem and was very afraid because כִּי לֹא יִרְאֶנּוּ הָאָדָם וְהָיָה, it is impossible to see Hashem's face and live (Shemos 33:20). His friends calmed him down, "You don't have to worry. It wasn't a real dream. You are always learning and davening. You think about Hashem all day, so you dream about it at night."

"That isn't true, I hardly ever think about Hashem, and that's why I am so afraid. In fact, I don't even have time to think about Hashem. I am so busy learning Torah and davening; when do I have time to think about Hashem?"

about this at least once a day. Just because it is an ongoing mitzvah, unrelated to a specific time, should a person perform it less, not even once a day? It is advised to think about Ahavas Hashem after Shacharis before he goes home to eat. Like the mitzvos of tefillin and lulav, where one doesn't eat before he performs the mitzvah, so, too, one shouldn't eat before he thinks about loving Hashem."

Here the Chofetz Chaim is discussing the mitzvah of loving Hashem, which is also a *mitzvoah tadira*, but this applies to all mitzvos that are constant, including emunah. If one can't think about this mitzvah all day, it would be a good idea to at least think about this mitzvah before he eats, just like many mitzvos which are performed before one eats.

The Shinover Rav zt'l was once learning a Mishnah in Pirkei Avos for an entire hour. Next to him, there was

a scholar who spoke with chutzpah. He said, "I give a shiur in Mishnayos. In one hour, I teach an entire chapter. But I saw you studying Mishnayos for an hour, and in this hour, all you studied was one Mishnah!"

The Shinover Rav replied, "For words to come out of the mouth (אריים זאגן) it doesn't take so long, but to bring the words into the heart (אריים אריות) that takes a lot more time."

The lessons of emunah need reviewing. It isn't sufficient to think about emunah occasionally. Thoughts of emunah should be frequently (or constantly) on our minds, and then the lessons will penetrate.

In this week's parashah, by *makas Barad* (hail), a wondrous thing occurred. Moshe warned the Mitzrim that the makah was about to come. The hail would kill all animals and slaves in the field, but those who feared Hashem should bring their

animals and slaves indoors, where they would be protected. Almost no one heeded the warning! They left the animals and slaves in the field and suffered a terrible loss. How could it be that they weren't afraid? After witnessing six *makos*, where all that Moshe said occurred, wouldn't logic dictate that to be worried that Moshe's warning and predictions would occur this time as well? But they weren't afraid. This is what happens when people don't think.

The Imrei Emes wrote to his grandson, Reb Menachem Noson hy'd, "To my dear grandson, Menachem Noson שיחי. You requested that I write to you about yiras Shamayim. We read yesterday in the parashah

(פרשת ורא, 9:20-21) הִירָא אֶת דְּבַר ה' מֵעֲבָדֵי פַרְעֹה הַנִּים אֶת עֲבָדָיו וְאֶת מִקְנֵהוּ אֶל הַבָּתִּים, וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא שָׂם לְבוֹ אֶל דְּבַר ה' וַיַּעֲזֹב אֶת עֲבָדָיו וְאֶת מִקְנֵהוּ בַשָּׂדֶה 'He who feared the word of Hashem among Pharaoh's servants drove his servants and his livestock into the houses. But he who did not *put his heart* to the word of Hashem left his servants and his livestock in the field.' It seems that yiras Hashem meant to place every matter on one's heart, not to do anything that isn't Hashem's will, and to believe that Hashem's honor fills the earth. In this manner, you will attain yiras Shamayim.

Signed by your grandfather, who seeks your well-being..."<sup>2</sup>

The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 12:2) says that the pasuk, הִירָא

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2. The Mesilas Yesharim (2) writes, "When a person goes through life without thinking whether his ways are good or bad, he is like a blind person walking on the seashore. The danger is great, and his chances of drowning are greater than his chances of survival." People tend not to think, but only through thinking can we improve our ways.



אֵת דְּבַר ה' מַעֲבָדֵי פַרְעֹה, 'He who feared the word of Hashem among Pharaoh's servants' is referring to Iyov. He feared Hashem and he brought his cattle and slaves indoors. וְאִשֶּׁר לֹא שָׂם לְבוֹ אֶל דְּבַר ה', 'But he who did not put his heart to the word of Hashem left his servants and his livestock in the field' this was Pharaoh with his nation."

From the entire nation of Mitzrayim, only one person believed that the *makah* of Barad would come. The explanation is that they all knew what would happen with their minds, but their hearts were distant. The same is true with all areas of yiras Shamayim. It isn't

enough for a person to be wise, for an idea to be known in the mind. It must reach the heart, as it states (Devarim 4:39) וִידַעַת הַיּוֹם וְהַשַּׁבָּת אֵל לִבְכֶּךָ כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל הָאָרֶץ "You shall know this day and review it in your heart, that Hashem is G-d in heaven above, and upon the earth below; there is nothing else." You begin with knowing the emunah in your mind, and when you think about it repeatedly, it penetrates, and the ideas become part of your heart.<sup>3</sup>

### Tikun of Shovavim with Emunah

The Or Lashamayim of Apta zt'l teaches, "In previous generations, the

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3. It states (Bamidbar 24:20) רְאִישֵׁית גּוֹיִם עֲמָלֵק, "Amalek was the first of the nations..." רְאִישֵׁית alludes to the ראש, the head. Amalek's agenda is that everything should remain in the ראש, in the mind and that one shouldn't think too much because through thinking ideas enter the heart.

The Gemara (Megillah 16:) says that a sofer must write Megillas Esther on שרטוט, engraved lines. This is also the halachah regarding a sefer Torah. This is a hint that the ideas of the Torah (and of Megillas Esther) must be engraved into our hearts.

tikun of people's souls was achieved through afflictions (*sigufim*). This broke the *kelipos* and removed the screens (*מסכים*) that separate the neshamah [from Hashem]. But now, in the generation close to the coming of Moshiach *tzidkeinu*, the tikun (rectification) is easy, and people don't need *sigufim*. The tikun is with emunah, to believe in the G-d of the world, and with this emunah, they will live and be rectified."

Reb Yechezkel Levinstein zt'l said, "We are now in the days of Shovavim Ta"t. Chasidim and Anshei Maaseh would engage in spiritual deeds these days. They would fast many days, say selichos, and the like. I think that the primary emphasis should be to strengthen emunah. When there is emunah, there is everything. As it states (Nedarim 41.), דדא ביה כולא ביה, when there is emunah, everything is there. Chazal say בא חבוק והעמידן על אחת צדיק יהיה, באמנותו, Chavakuk

HaNavi declared that the primary emphasis should be on emunah. All of the parshiyos of Shovavim discuss the story of yetzias Mitzrayim and then the building of the Mishkan. They are all discussing emunah. When the wise person thinks about these matters, he will receive aid from Above to be able to increase emunah in himself (Or Yechezkel, Emunah p.245).

Rebbe Tzadok HaKohen (Tzidkas HaTzaddik 156) teaches, "Tikun: The rectification is to believe that there is no *מקרה*, chance, in the world, rather everything is Hashem's hashgachah from above. To believe with a complete belief that nothing in the world happens by accident and everything that occurs was planned by Hashem yisbarach. This is truly the most important matter. The 613 mitzvos are counsels to attain the knowledge that everything is from Hashem. All aveiros are referred to in the tochachah (Vayikra 26:21) *וְאִם תִּלְכוּ*



קרי, 'If you treat Me as happenstance' from the word מקרה, chance... and all the punishments are called וְהִלַּכְתִּי עִמָּכֶם בְּחַמַּת (Vayikra 26:28) קרי, 'I will treat you with a fury of happenstance'. When one believes that there is no happenstance, this sweetens all the dinim and rectifies all aveiros."

It states (Yirmiyahu 5:1) שׁוּטוּ בְּחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וּרְאוּ נָא וּדְעוּ וּבְקֶשׁוּ בְּרַחוּבוֹתֶיהָ אִם תִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ אִם יֵשׁ עֹשֶׂה מְשֻׁפָּט מִבְּקֶשׁ אֱמוּנָה וְאֶסְלַח לָהּ "Stroll in the streets of Yerushalayim, and see now and know, and seek in its squares, whether you will find a man, whether there is one who performs justice, who seeks emunah, and I will forgive her."

The Yesod HoAvodah zt'l learns from the pasuk, "This means that even if his

emunah isn't yet perfect, if he is מְבַקֵּשׁ אֱמוּנָה, seeking emunah, I have already forgiven him" (Toras Avos, Emunah u'Bitachon, 53).

Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin zt'l taught, "If one doesn't ever forget Hakadosh Baruch Hu, he won't forget Hakadosh Baruch Hu in Gehinom, either, and automatically, Gehinnom won't harm him. The fire will be extinguished, which is the fire of the yetzer hara."

On the pasuk (Chavakuk 2:4) וַצַּדִּיק בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה, "the righteous shall live by his emunah". Yismach Yisrael (Shemos 6) learns from this pasuk that when a person is always יִחְיֶה, living with emunah, and he has *chiyus* from his emunah, he will become a great tzaddik.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Chazal (Hilchos Purim, Yerushalmi, Megillah 1:4) say כל הפושט יד נוגתים לו, This can be translated as כל הפושט יד, whoever can remove from his thoughts that it is his arms that achieve things, נוגתים לו, he will be rewarded with immense bounty.

Chazal say, "Who is a ben Olam Haba? He who answers amen

### Gedorim and Siyagim

In the year תשפ"ב, in the month of Av, some people were vacationing in a resort, and it was time to daven minchah. One man who was cautious to wash his hands before Minchah went to the lake to wash his hands there.

He saw a head bobbing up and down in the water. He swam out and brought a young girl to shore. Being a Hatzalah volunteer, he was also able to revive her.

From this story we see that when one has a kabbalah tovah, one good deed will

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with all his strength (בכל כחו)." The Ksav Sofer (Shu"t Orach Chaim 29) explains that בכל כחו refers to a person with a lot of strength and energy, and it appears that he succeeds on his own, but he nevertheless attributes his success to Hashem. He says אמ"ן, which is roshei teivos for א"ל מלך נאמן, he believes that everything is from Hashem; he is undoubtedly a Ben Olam HaBa because such a person won't be quick to sin.

The word דאג"ה worry, is made up of the first letters of the alef beis, but the letter ב' is missing. This is because ב' represents בטחון, and when there is בטחון, there is no worry.

Once there was a fire in Reb Avraham Genichovsky zt'l building, and everyone had to be evacuated. Reb Avraham had thousands of his hand-written chiddushim in his apartment. Someone asked Reb Avraham if he was worried that his chidushei Torah might get ruined by the fire or the water being pumped into the building.

He replied, "Worry? I don't have any worries. The only דאג"ה, worry, that I know of is on Fridays when I cut my nails because the Rema (260:1) writes that one should cut his fingernails according to the siman בדאג"ה. Other than that, I don't know what worry is.

(The Rema writes, "When you cut your fingernails, don't cut them in order. Begin with the left hand and start with the fourth finger. For the right hand, begin with the second finger (pointing finger). The siman is דבדג"א for the left hand and בדאג"ה for the right hand.")

lead to another. In this case, due to his good kabbalah, he merited to save a Jewish child.

Reb Tuvyah Weiss zt'l (av beis din of Yerushalayim) tells that when he lived in Antwerp, the following halachic *shaalah* came before him: Someone had some money in his wallet that his friend had asked him to hold on to. Later that day, he checked his back pocket for the wallet, but it wasn't there. His friend's money was lost. Does he have to pay for the loss he caused his fellow man?

He was a שומר חנם (which means he was watching the money as a favor. He wasn't paid to watch the money.) Therefore, he would only have to pay for the loss if he was פושע, guilty of not guarding the money adequately. The question was whether keeping the money in the wallet, in his back pocket, was considered watching the money well enough or not?

Rav Weiss ruled that it depended on what type of jacket he was wearing. If he wore a long jacket, the money was well-guarded and he doesn't have to pay for it. But if he was wearing a short jacket, others can see that he has a wallet in his back pocket, which attracts thieves to pickpocket and take the money away. Therefore, He will be held guilty and have to pay for the loss. As Chazal (Succah 26) say, פרצה קורא לגנב, when a thief sees an opportunity, he takes advantage of the situation.

Later that same day, an esteemed guest arrived in Antwerp, Rav Shlomo of Bobov zt'l. When Reb Tuvya Weiss met with the Rebbe, the Rebbe told him about a din Torah that came before the הרי בשמים (Reb Aryeh Leib Horowitz, rav of Striya, zt'l). The *shaalah* was about a *shaliach* who was sent to deliver money. The *shaliach* placed the money in his pocket and lost it.

Reb Tuvyah was amazed. The Bobover Rebbe didn't hear about the din Torah that he had that day, yet he was discussing the same question.

The Bobover Rebbe said that the הרי בשמים ruled that he wasn't guilty. He watched the money well enough in his back pocket and didn't have to pay for the loss. The תובעים (those who wanted he should pay) showed the הרי בשמים that the Chasam Sofer zt'l was asked the same question in Pressburg, and the Chasam Sofer ruled that he was guilty because he didn't watch the money well enough. The Chasam Sofer said that he does have to pay for the loss!

The הרי בשמים replied that in Pressburg, most people wore short jackets. Therefore, placing the money in the back pocket wasn't considered watching the money properly. However, the הרי בשמים lived in an area where most people wore long jackets. The wallet was concealed from thieves, and

therefore, it can be considered that he watched the money sufficiently.

When Reb Tuvyah Weiss repeated this story, he would say that this was a "Bobover *Mofes* (miracle)" because, on his own, the Rebbe discussed the very same question that he had ruled on that day and indicated to Reb Tuvyah that he had ruled correctly.

Let us learn the following lesson from this story:

There are times when a person does an aveirah by accident. He didn't want to perform the aveirah, but it came to him. One example is if one is by his computer and a forbidden sight accidentally pops up. Is he held responsible for this slip, or can he claim that he didn't want it, it came up on its own, and it isn't his fault?

Another example is if someone finds out that he ate something that wasn't one hundred percent kosher. He claims he didn't want

the aveirah, and it happened to him by accident. Is that a legitimate claim?

It will largely depend on how cautious he was and the types of *gedorim* (safeguards) he set into place to protect himself from aveiros. If he does everything he should do, he isn't responsible for the accidents that occur. But if he wasn't cautious, he didn't take sufficient precautions, he can't excuse himself that it was an accident. He could have safeguarded himself. In the story, wearing a long jacket was a sufficient precaution, and he doesn't have to pay. A long jacket can represent when one covers his body with proper coverings and *gedorim*. In those cases, he is deemed innocent. He did as much as he could.

It states (Devarim 11:22) כִּי אִם (For if you keep all these commandments...) The Or HaChaim discusses the double expression שְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּן. He writes, "שְׁמֹר" if you make

safeguards and protection to keep the mitzvos, תִּשְׁמְרוּן, you are guaranteed that you will be able to keep all of the mitzvos. But when you don't make safeguards, you will transgress some of the mitzvos. Such as Shabbos, if you don't add on from the week onto Shabbos, he may transgress the Shabbos itself."

### Benefits of Kabalos Tovos

Why is a good resolution called a קבלה טובה? Shouldn't it be called a התחייבות טובה, a good obligation? What is one receiving when he takes upon himself something? Indeed, when one makes a kabbalah tovah, he will receive brachos and yeshuos.

Reb Yonason Eibshitz zt'l (Yaaras Dvash Drush 16) teaches that making kabalos tovos is mesugal for one's tefillos to be answered, as it states (Eichah 3:8-9) גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשׁוּעַ שְׁתֵּם, "Though I cry out and plead, He shuts out my prayer." This refers to the tragedy of tefillos that aren't

answered, r'l. The solution is in the next pasuk, גְּדָר דְּרָבִי, make gedarim, boundaries, and your tefillos will be answered.

Reb Yochanan, the *dayan* of Kremnitz zt'l (as quoted in טללי (אורות נדפס שנת תרצ"ו) taught that when one makes kabbalos tovos, he receives reward in this world. Although there are no rewards for the mitzvos in this world, there will be reward in this world for making a good kabbalah. The hint to this is in Tehillim (18:21-22), יְגַמְלֵנִי ה' כְּצִדְקֵי קָבֵר יְדֵי יֹשִׁיב, "Hashem rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanliness of my hands He recompensed me." But the question is, if there is no reward for the mitzvos in this world, how does Hashem repay in this world? The answer is in the next pasuk בִּי שְׂמֹרֶתִי דְּרָבִי ה', for I have made gedarim and safeguards. Therefore, I am eligible for reward in this world.

## Look Inside the Siddur

Yalkut Meam Loez (Bereishis vol.1 p.123) urges us to daven while looking in the siddur. He writes, "When you daven by heart, your mind will wander and think about other matters. But if you daven while looking in a siddur and don't raise your eyes, you are guaranteed not to be distracted by foreign thoughts. This is because when you toil with all your strength to daven with kavanah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will certainly have compassion on you and save you from the yetzer hara."

In particular, the sefarim discuss saying birkas hamazon from a bencher. The Yalkut Meam Loez writes, "The Arizal would even say birkas hamazon from a sefer, although birkas hamazon is something that even children know by heart. And the reason is what we wrote above."

Reb Eliezer ben Makir, in his sefer Seder HaYom,



when discussing Birkas HaMazon, writes, "If you have a sefer before you to look in, you can have better kavanah, and you won't think about other matters. That is certainly very good. You will be keeping one of the mitzvos of the Torah properly, bringing blessings to yourself and your entire family.

A woman came to the house of Reb Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt'l and told him her immense tzaar that one of her children died young, r'l. She requested a brachah to bear another child. Reb Yehoshua Leib advised her to accept on herself to say birkas hamazon from a siddur. The woman did so, and she had another child. (Amud Aish Toldos HaGaon Maharil Diskin p.161)

The Mishnah Berurah (185:3) writes, quoting the Eliyahu Rabba, "It is good to say the brachos in a loud voice because the voice arouses kavanah."

A chasid of the Yismach Yisrael complained that his son doesn't say birkas hamazon, and all his attempts to encourage him to do so don't help. The Rebbe replied, "If you accept upon yourself to bench in a loud voice, your son will begin to say birkas hamazon" (b'Yishishim Chachmah).

The Be'er Heitev, quoting the Bach, writes, "Those who are careful will always say the *birkas hamazon* from a siddur and not by heart."

Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zt'l said, "A segulah to have children and grandchildren who are *talmidei chachamim* and *yirei Hashem* is to be cautious to always bench from a siddur (Birkas Dovid).

### Passing Tests in the Final Generation

The Tiferes Shlomo (Eikev, on the pasuk וְהָיָה עִקֵּב תִּשְׁמָעוּן) teaches, "It is very proper for every person to understand and to know that due to the great darkness that exists today, any type of arousal to serve

Hashem with Torah and tefillah is very precious before Hashem yisbarach, and He accepts it, even when one's avodas Hashem isn't as it should be and it isn't with great kavanah in comparison to the services of previous generations. Nevertheless, the little bit that he does is precious before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, like that done years before. This is because due to our many aveiros, there is a lot of darkness in the world, the galus is very hard to tolerate, and there are many tzaros, and the Sitra Achara chases after us all day without letting up. Therefore, every drop of arousal for kedushah accomplishes a lot. As it is known, a drop of light banishes a lot of darkness. Therefore, it is proper that every person should strengthen himself and arouse himself to yiras Shamayim in this time, because keviyachol the King is waiting in the doorway for those who knock to do

teshuvah, and He wants to accept them with love."

The Emes l'Yaakov of Sadigura zt'l (תרל"א) teaches in the name of the Arizal that all neshamos were contained in Adam HaRishon. The early generations were associated with Adam's head. There were generations of the רגליים, feet, and there are the generations of the עקב, the heel. The "heel" are these generations of today, the generations of עקבתא דמשיחא, "the heel of Moshiach", because they come from the heel of Adam HaRishon. Although we can't compare the neshamos that are עקב, heel, to the neshamos that are ראש, the head, nevertheless, Hashem's primary joy and pleasure comes from the avodah of the people of the lower generations, because they have to battle so much harder to do Hashem's will.

The Sadigura Rebbe says this is alluded to in Chazal (Tanchuma Acharei 2) "The heel of Adam darkened the light of the sun." He taught, "The

neshamos of עקבתא דמשיחא, that are associated with the heel of Adam HaRishon, with their good deeds and with their Torah and avodah they darken the sun, the neshamos of the tzaddikim of the early generations who were associated with the head of Adam HaRishon..."<sup>5</sup>

The Chasam Sofer zt'l says that when the Avos *hakedoshim* stand up at techiyas hameisim, it would seem that we will be like nobodies compared to them. But the Chasam Sofer said it isn't so. "After we suffered 1700 years of galus (and now it is two hundred years more than that!) and we suffered from the governments, we are equal to the righteousness of the early generations, which didn't have the tzaros and galus that we endure.... Your days will be considered greater than theirs..."

It states (Rus 3:10) הַיְטִבְתָּ חֶסֶדְךָ הָאֲחֵרִון מִן הָרִאשׁוֹן, "your latest act of kindness is greater than the first." Avodas Yisrael (haftarah of Vayeira) teaches that chesed, kindness, in this pasuk refers to avodas Hashem, and the pasuk is saying, "The Jewish nation does a greater chesed when they serve Hashem than the chesed (avodas Hashem) of the early generations, about which it states (Yirmiyahu 2:2) זָכַרְתִּי לְךָ חֶסֶד נְעוּרַיִךְ, "I remember to you the lovingkindness of your youth." That wasn't so great because it is certainly not such a great *chiddush* [when the early generation served Hashem], for they saw all of the miracles that were performed for them in Mitzrayim and at the sea, and that the clouds of glory surrounded them, and the miracles of the manna, the well, and the *slav*. Undoubtedly, they should

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5. This is hinted at in the words (Devarim 7:12) וְהָיָה עִקֵּב תִּשְׁמְעוּן אֵת הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֵלֹהִים, This means that והייה, there will be immense joy, when you keep the mitzvos in the עִקֵּב, in the generations of דמשיחא.

recognize Hashem. But us, that we don't see anything of Hashem's G-dliness, on the contrary, among all people of the world, the Jewish nation is always the most looked down at and despised - and, nevertheless, we trust in Hashem and He will save us speedily in our days."

The Midrash states, "You don't call a person by Hashem's name, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu calls Yisrael by His name, as it states (Tehillim 82:6) אָנִי אֱמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהִים אַתָּם, 'I said: You are Elokim...'" This is a great honor that Hashem gives to the Jewish nation.

However, the Avodas Yisrael zt"l (Likutim Tehilim) asks that the next pasuk states, אָכֵן כְּאָדָם תָּמוּתוֹן, "Indeed, as a man you will die." In this pasuk Bnei Yisrael seem to be very human.

He answers, "But the truth is that we can explain אָנִי אֱמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהִים אַתָּם, 'I said: You

are Elokim...'" If you want to know the reason why I consider you so exulted until I call you by My name, it is because אָכֵן כְּאָדָם תָּמוּתוֹן, 'Indeed, as a man you will die.'"

The Avodas Yisrael explains that מִיַּתָּה, death, means that they fall from their levels and fall into taavos. "Nevertheless, they don't give up and win against the yetzer hara. Therefore, I say אֱלֹהִים אַתָּם, you are Elokim."

In other words, the two pesukim אָנִי אֱמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהִים אַתָּם, 'I said: You are Elokim...' and אָכֵן כְּאָדָם תָּמוּתוֹן, 'Indeed, as a man you will die' aren't a contradiction. In fact, the latter pasuk explains why Hashem honors us and calls us Elokim. It is because we are human, have faults, fall from our level, and nevertheless pick ourselves up again. This is very precious to Hashem and for it, Hashem calls us אֱלֹהִים.

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6. The letter ץ is a ן"ן with a י"ד sitting on its back. The combination

The Avodas Yisrael concludes, "And because Hashem gives the Jewish nation this great and holy title when they serve Hashem, they are able to annul all harsh decrees." They are called אֱלֹקִים, and as Hashem makes decrees, the Jewish nation is given an equal, or greater, power, and they can even annul Hashem's decrees.

The Avodas Yisrael teaches this from the next pasuk (Tehillim 82:8) קוֹמָה אֱלֹקִים שְׁפֹטָה הָאָרֶץ, "Arise Elokim judge the earth." The Avodas

Yisrael explains that אֱלֹקִים in this pasuk refers to the Jewish nation. "When Yisrael who are called Elokim keep the Torah, and they serve Hashem with all their hearts, then שְׁפֹטָה הָאָרֶץ they are able to judge the earth. A tzaddik can make a decree, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will keep it, and He will provide an abundance of children, health, and parnassah, amen, may it be so."

### Mesirus Nefesh

When the plague of *tzefardeia* ended, there were

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of the letters נ"ן and י"ד is significant. When you internalize the message of these two letters, you can be called a צדי"ק. Sefer HaChaim (Sefer Zechiyos ch.6) explains that the nun stands for nefilah, falling. The yud on its back represents Yiddishkeit, kedushah. Who is a tzaddik? A person who, even after he falls from his spiritual level, continues to carry on his shoulders the yoke of Yiddishkeit and kedushah. He maintains his previous stringencies and stubbornly doesn't allow himself to fall lower. This is a tzaddik.

Rashi (6:9) writes חבל על דאבדן ולא משתכחין, 'Woe to those who are lost, and can no longer be found.'

משתכחין can also be translated as forgotten. According to this translation, the Meor Einayim translates על דאבדן as referring to people who lose their level in avodas Hashem, and even then, לא משתכחין, they don't forget Hashem.

piles of dead frogs all around Mitzrayim, as it states (8:9-10)

ויעש ה' כדבר משה וימתו הצפרדעים מן הבתים מן החצרות ומן השדות, "Hashem did according to Moshe's word, and the frogs died from the houses, from the courtyards, and from the fields." ויצברו אתם חמרים חמרים, ותבאש הארץ "They gathered

them into many heaps, and the land stank."

But there was one group of frogs that didn't die. *Daas Zekainim* writes, "The frogs that went into the ovens didn't die because they trusted in Hakadosh Baruch Hu and entered the hot ovens by Hashem's command."<sup>7</sup> We learn from

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7. Some frogs entered fiery furnaces, as it states (7:28) ושרץ היאר צפרדעים ועלו ובאו בביתך ובחדר משכבך ועל מטתך ובבית עבדיך ובעמך ובתנורך ובמשארותיך "The Nile will swarm with frogs, and they will go up and come into your house and your bedroom and upon your bed and into the house of your servants and your people, **and your ovens** and into your kneading troughs." Those who entered the ovens survived.

Kabbalah sefarim teach us that the ten makos represent the ten *sefiros*, starting from the tenth and going backward. The first *makah*, dam, represents the tenth *sefirah*, *malchus*. *Tzefardeia* represents the ninth *sefirah* called *yesod*, and so on.

The *sefirah* of Yesod is about kedushah, which refers to *tznius*, pure thoughts, holy eyes, and so on. As we wrote, some frogs jumped into the fire. We don't find this in the other makos. This teaches us that when it comes to the midah of yesod, one must be prepared to jump into the fire.

Another significance of *tzefardeia* is that this is the only time that it states that Moshe davened with shouts, as it states (8:8) ויצעק משה "אל ה' על דבר הצפרדעים "Moshe shouted out to Hashem concerning the frogs."

It states (8:10) ויצברו אתם חמרים חמרים ותבאש הארץ "They gathered them



this that when one is *moser nefesh* for Hashem, miracles will happen to him. Sefer Chasidim (196) states, "If a person runs away from sin, Heaven performs a miracle for him."

The Bnei Yissachar (Igra d'Pirka 24) teaches, "Rebbe Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov

zt'l said that when a person needs to accomplish something that is beyond nature, for example, if naturally, he isn't able to bear children, then he should do a great mitzvah beyond nature, and then he will be able to acquire and do things that are beyond nature."<sup>8</sup>

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into many heaps, and the land stank." This is the only *makah* where it states that the earth stank. (By blood, it says that the Nile stank, but the earth stank is only by this *makah*.)

The Chidushei Harim zt'l says that this *makah* represents *yesod*, and the stench of the sins related to *yesod* is foul and disgusting to Hashem.

This expression of prayer isn't used for any other *makah*. We find (8:26) ויעתר אל ה' , and we find (9:23) ויפרש כפיו אל ה' , but we don't find ויעק only by *tzefardeia*. This is because many sincere, intense, and desperate tefillos are needed to become pure in *yesod*.

**8.** Another way to merit miracles beyond nature is to do mitzvos l'shem shamayim.

The Gemara Pesachim (50:) discusses the immense reward for keeping the mitzvos. One pasuk (Tehillim 108:5) states כי גדול מעל שמים חסדך, "For Your kindness is great, above the heavens," and another pasuk states (Tehillim 57:11) כי גדול עד שמים חסדך, "For Your kindness is great, up to the heavens."

So, is Hashem's kindness up to heaven or beyond it? The Gemara responds, "One pasuk refers to those who serve Hashem l'shmah, and the other pasuk refers to those who serve Hashem shelo l'shmah.

So, the reward for serving Hashem l'shmah is "above heaven" (מעל)

Moshe said (6:12) הן בני ישראל לא שמעו אלי ואיך ישמעני פרעה, "Behold, Bnei Yisrael did not hearken to me. How then will Pharaoh listen to me?" The truth is, Bnei Yisrael had a reason why they didn't listen to Moshe. It states (6:9) וידבר משה בן אל בני ישראל ולא שמעו אל משה מקצר רוח ומעבדה קשה, "Moshe spoke thus to Bnei Yisrael, but they did not hearken to Moshe because of their shortness of breath and because of their hard labor." The *meforshim* ask that Pharaoh didn't

suffer from מקצר רוח ומעבדה קשה, shortness of breath and hard work like the Jewish nation had, so why was Moshe certain that Pharaoh won't believe?

The Beer Mayim Chaim zt'l (Noach) answers that Moshe was saying that the Jewish nation didn't go beyond their nature to believe in Hashem. Moshe told Hashem that if they aren't going beyond their limits, miracles beyond limits won't happen to them.<sup>9</sup>

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(שמים חסדי). The Ran (on the Rif, p.17.) explains, "This means Hashem changes the rules of heaven for him." That is the reward for those who serve Hashem l'shmah.

9. A simcha hall in Bnei Brak was accidentally double booked. Both families were celebrating a *sheva brachos*, and when they met at the hall, they realized that the hall's management had made a mistake. A smaller hall was available in this building, but both claimed the smaller hall didn't have enough room for their guests.

One of the parties was incensed, and he was shouting at everyone. He even yelled at the other couple for renting the hall, although they had rented it before him! Then he went to the manager to shout at him. "I will bring you to court. You will pay for this." Many unpleasant words came out of his mouth, and he even threatened to cause the manager to lose his job.

Worried, the manager called the secretary and shouted at her for

renting the hall to two families on the same night. "You are fired!" he said in uncontrolled anger.

The manager quickly took hold of himself and calmed down. He realized there was no purpose in speaking to the furious client who threatened to drive him out of business, so instead, he talked to the other couple. They were also quite upset (certainly after the other party shouted at them), but at least they were rational.

"I will upgrade your *simchah* if you use the smaller hall," the manager said. "I will put out more expensive utensils and decorations and serve better foods."

But the *mechutan* replied, "I'm sorry. We want the larger hall, and we should get it because we rented this hall first. Let them take the smaller hall!"

"Do me a favor," the manager said. "I am stuck. I need your help."

The *mechutan* was compassionate and said, "For my part, I agree to be *mevater* and move our *simchah* to the smaller hall. But my wife won't agree to it."

"Can I speak to your wife?" the manager asked.

"Of course," he replied, "but it won't help."

The manager approached his wife and repeated that he would upgrade their *simchah*, and he expressed to her the predicament he was in, but she refused to be *mevater*. "We ordered the hall first. It is his problem, not ours."

The manager had one more tactic up his sleeves, and he decided to use it. He asked her, "Is there any particular *yeshuah* you need?"

She immediately began to cry. She said that her father, who lives in Belgium, was recently diagnosed with cancer r"l.

The manager said, "I advise you to be *mevater*. The merit of your *vitur* will go to your father, and he will have a *refuah sheleimah*."

She said that she needed to think it over. It didn't take long, and she agreed to move her *simchah* to the smaller hall.

Additionally, she requested that the secretary not be fired, and davened that in the merit of her vitur and that she is helping the secretary, her father have a refuah sheleimah.

The manager promised that he would call up the secretary right away to apologize and to rehire her.

A couple of days later, her father went to the hospital for his first round of chemotherapy. The doctors performed one more routine test before beginning the treatment and discovered that there wasn't any cancer.

The doctors were shocked. They looked at the pictures of the first test, and there was clearly cancer then. How did the dreaded disease disappear?

The answer is that his daughter was *mevater*, although it was hard for her. She went beyond her nature for the sake of helping others and for the sake of peace. And when one serves Hashem beyond nature, Hashem performs miracles for them beyond nature.

Here is another beautiful story.

A doctor came to a shivah and said, "I don't usually come to be *menachem avel*, but this time, I made an exception because I have *hakaras hatov* for the deceased. The *niftares*, Mrs. Moskovitz, taught me to believe in Hashem, so I figured I should come to her shivah."

This is what happened.

She came to the doctor four years earlier, and the doctor told her that she had only four weeks to live. She replied, "That isn't correct. I will live longer. I have life insurance."

The doctor was confused. What life insurance can guarantee a person would live?

She explained that she takes care of her elderly mother. Her mother cannot manage without her. "I will live to take care of my mother."

Her mother was niftar four years later, and soon afterward, Mrs. Moskowitz was niftarah.

**Yesurim**

The Kamarna (Heichal HaBrachah Vayechi) writes, "I heard my Rebbe say to someone, "Accept everything that happens to you with

love, and then you will have both Olam HaZeh and Olam Haba." The man replied that he will daven to have the strength to accept everything with love. The Rebbe replied,

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The doctor said, "I never come to the shivah of my patients, but this woman taught me to believe in Hashem, so I felt obliged to make an exception and come." She served Hashem beyond nature, and a miracle beyond nature occurred to her.

The Shinover Rav zt'l established a *beis medresh* in Tzefas and built a mikvah in the basement. The Shinover Rav made it known that he must be the first person to use the mikvah every day. One morning, he sensed that someone had used the mikvah before him and demanded to know who it was.

The person who used the mikvah before him didn't have children, although he was married for several years. He needed a salvation, and had hoped that the Shinover Rav would bless him, and now, it seemed, the Shinover Rav was upset at him.

Timidly, he admitted that he was the one to use the mikvah.

The Shinover Rav shouted, "You did? You shall have a son this year!" The man was indeed blessed with a child.

The Shinover Rav explained, "I had a great *nisayon* of anger, but I held myself back, and I gave the merit to the person who went to the mikvah before me, and that is what brought him his yeshuah."

The Imrei Chaim zt'l repeated this story. He heard it from the child who was born from this blessing. The Imrei Chaim said, "This story makes a stronger impact on me than all the stories of *mofsim* I've heard," because this is a story that, potentially, everyone can do. When we go beyond our limits to do Hashem's will, miracles beyond nature can occur.

"You spoke correctly. One has to daven for this."

There seem to be two opinions in Chazal, whether one should praise Hashem first and then state his requests, or visa versa, to first ask for his requests and then to praise Hashem. Based on the lesson above, the Kamarna said that one should first ask Hashem for strength to recognize that everything is for the good, and then he will be able to praise Hashem.

The Chofetz Chaim (Shem Olam ch.3 Hagah) writes in the name of the Vilna Gaon zy'a,

"If it weren't for yesurim, לֹא בּוֹצֵאנוּ יְדִינוּ וּרְגִלֵינוּ בְּזֵה הָעוֹלָם, we have no hope of earning Olam HaBa."

The Chofetz Chaim explains that after a person goes up to heaven, the yeusrim he suffered in his lifetime can change the heavenly court's verdict to a good decree. "Suddenly, a bas kol announces and asks, 'Where are the yesurim that he had in this world?' Immediately, all the yesurim he had throughout his life gather, and they all go to the right side of the scale. This turns the scale to the side of virtue.<sup>10</sup> This is because the

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**10.** Reb Yitzchak Shlomo Ungar zt'l, rav of Chug Chasam Sofer in Bnei Brak, would often talk about two people who were friends for years – from their youth until their old age – and they made a pact that the first one to leave this world would return to tell his friend what happened to him in the heavenly court. They shook hands on this agreement.

Years passed, and one of them was *niftar*. Some time passed, and he came to his friend. He told him, "I don't have permission to tell you what goes on in heaven, but one thing I can tell you: Do you remember the time we were walking down the street, carrying in our hands flour that we ground for baking matzos? We looked up and saw that the sky had turned cloudy. We were afraid it would rain, and the flour would become chametz. The clouds dispersed



*yesurim* removes his aveiros from him, and he becomes a tzaddik. When this occurs, he becomes happy and praises Hashem for the *yesurim* he endured." Chazal (Sifri Ha'azinu) says that Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "Whenever I give you *yesurim* in this world, remember how much good I will give you because of it in the future world of Olam HaBa."

A simple person was niftar in Radin. He wasn't known to be a tzaddik or a talmid chacham, so no one thought it necessary to tell the Chofetz Chaim. When the Chofetz Chaim heard that this simple man was niftar, he was upset that they didn't tell him. He wanted the zechus of going to this man's levayah.

When asked why he was so upset, the Chofetz Chaim

replied, "Behold it states (Mishlei 17:3) יבְחֵן לְבָבוֹתָהּ, "Hashem checks the heart." Only Hakadosh Baruch Hu knows what is happening in a person's heart. We can't know who is a tzaddik and who isn't. However, Chazal (Brachos 5.) tell us יְסוּרִים מְמַרְקֵין כָּל אָדָם, עוֹנְתֵינוּ שֶׁל אָדָם, that *yesurim* remove all aveiros of man. The niftar was a baal *yesurim*, so he was certainly clean from aveiros and a tzaddik. It would, therefore, be a merit for me to partake in the final honor of this tzaddik, to attend his levayah."

The Beis Yosef had a malach (also called a Magid) teach him Torah and mussar; the lessons are written in Magid Meisharim. It states in this holy sefer (beginning of Vayeshev) that the magid (the malach) told the Beis Yosef that his third wife (זיווג שלישי) would have a

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a minute and a half later, and the sun shone like before. We were relieved. Now, know that the minute and a half when we were afraid was placed on the scale because every moment of *yesurim* is valued in heaven."

baby boy. Naturally, she couldn't bear children, but she endured yesurim, and in this merit, heaven would bless her with a son. The yesurim were (a) the Beis Yosef once was גולה למקום תורה, went to exile to study Torah, and the separation wasn't easy for his wife. (2) When he returned home, he fell ill, and his wife had to take care of him. This was also very hard for her. But with the merit of these hardships, she was able to bear a child. According to the rules of nature, she couldn't bear children (in a previous gilgul, she was a male, a talmid chacham) but had her salvation because of the yesurim she endured.

We quote from the Magid Meisharim, "She merited this due to her good deeds, and because of the tzaar that she endured when you [the Beis Yosef] went to galus and was distant from her. She also had tzaar when she took care of you when you were ill. This is because a

person gains so much from the yesurim that come to him when he accepts the yesurim with סבר פנים יפות, with a happy attitude, as joyous as someone who merited to perform a mitzvah. This is because when the body suffers *yesurim*, the *tumah* becomes weaker, and the soul becomes purer and cleaner from the *tumah*. Therefore, you will have a male child, as I promised you."

The Chofetz Chaim (Shemiras HaLashon, Shaar HaTevunah ch.8) explains how a person can reach the level of being שמחים בסורים, to be happy with yesurim: "This middah [of being happy with yesurim] comes to a person when he has a holy nefesh and he has pure emunah in Hashem that He watches over everything he does. As it states (Iyov 34:21) כִּי עֵינָיו עַל דַּרְכֵי אִישׁ, 'For His eyes are upon man's ways,' and Hashem does everything for his benefit."<sup>11</sup>

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11. It states (Shemos 2:12) וַיִּפֶן פָּה וְלֹא יָדַע. Yosher Divrei Emes (Shemos)

### Turning *Din* to *Rachamim*

There is a principle and a way to turn a harsh judgment into mercy - *rachamim*. When one remembers that whatever he is going through was handpicked and planned by Hashem, that, in itself, will turn Elokim (Hashem's attribute of strict judgment) into Havayah (Hashem's attribute of kindness).

This is hinted at in the first pasuk of the parashah (6:2): וידבר אלקים אל משה ויאמר אליו: "Elokim spoke to Moshe and He said, 'I am Havayah.'" Hashem told Moshe that your awareness that everything comes from Hashem will turn Elokim

into Havayah – trouble into kindness.

This is also hinted in the pasuk (Tehillim 91:15) עמו אנכי בצרה ואחלצהו ואכבדהו, "I am with him in distress; I shall rescue him, and I shall honor him." When you know that Hashem is with you when you are in distress, you will merit salvation.

It is known that Nachum Ish Gam Zu was called so because he would always say גם זו לטובה, "This, too, is for the good." But there seems to be a word missing in his name! His name should have been נחום איש גם זו לטובה!

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writes that the pasuk is hinting that one should always say כה, "it was so decreed from heaven." וַיֵּקֶן כֹּה נֶכֶד, no matter what occurs, the good and the opposite, accept it because כה, this is how Hashem destined it to be.

We quote:

"Every person should have the attribute of כה. Regardless of whether what occurred was good or bad, he should say it is from heaven. If it is good, כה מן השמים, this is how it was decreed from heaven. And if chas veshalom it is bad, it is also כה מן השמים, as decreed from heaven. This is the way kosher Jewish people live."

Reb Hershele Liska answers that **גם זו** implies that "This is also from Hashem." His awareness was **גם זו**, that the hardships he was enduring were from Hashem. With this awareness, automatically, everything becomes good.

The Kaliver Rebbe Shlita from America (may he have a *refuah sheleima b'karov*) taught the following beautiful vort: It states (6:5-6) **וגם אני שמעתי את נאקת בני ישראל אשר מצרים מעבדים אתם...** "Also, I heard the moans of Bnei Yisrael that the Mitzrim are holding in bondage... Therefore, say to Bnei Yisrael, 'I am Hashem.'"

This can be translated as follows, "I heard that Bnei Yisrael say **אשר מצרים מעבדים אתם**, that the Mitzrim are

enslaving them. They think it comes from the Mitzrim. Therefore, tell them **אני ה'**, that everything is from Me, Hashem.

When Bnei Yisrael gain that awareness, the following words of the pasuk will transpire: **והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים והצלתי אתכם מעבדתם וגאלתי אתכם בזרוע נטויה ובשפטים גדלים**, "I will take you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will save you from their labor, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments." This is because when we believe everything comes from Hashem, everything becomes *chesed*.<sup>12</sup>

The Nile turned to blood, and all the fish died. This seemed like a problem for

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**12.** In the *zemiros* of *Kah Ribon* (Friday Night), it states, **לו יחיה גבר שנין** אלפין. Rebbe Yitzchak of Vorke zt'l says that אלפין can be translated as alefs, which represents Hashem. **לו יחיה גבר**, a person should live, שנין אלפין, years of recognizing that everything is from Hashem, **לא יעול גבורתך**, then he won't suffer from *gevuros*, *dinim*, and hardships. His awareness that everything is from Hashem will protect him from all troubles and turn all problems into goodness.

the Egyptians and the Jewish nation alike because one of the main staples in Mitzrayim was fish, as it states (Bamidbar 11:5) זכרנו את הדגה אשר נאכל מצרים חנם, "We remember the fish that we ate in Mitzrayim free of charge." It seemed that this *makkah* took away the *parnassah*, the livelihood of the Yidden. However, it was the opposite. The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 9:10) states, "The Jewish people became wealthy from the plague of blood. How? A Mitzri and a Yisrael were in the same house, and there was a barrel full of water. The Mitzri wanted to pour some of that water into his pitcher, but it became blood. The Yisrael was drinking water. The Mitzri said, 'Give me a

little bit of your water.' He gave, but it turned to blood.

The Mitzri said, 'Let's drink together from the same bowl.' The Yisrael drank water and the Mitzri drank blood. Only when he paid the Yisrael for the water did he have water. This was how the Jewish nation became wealthy."

The Zera Shimshon discusses this to show that when we think we are losing, Hashem turns everything around and makes it good for the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation thought they were losing when the Nile turned to blood because there would be no fish, but they became very wealthy and had plenty of food to eat.