

# Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita*

*Beshalach*



# Torah WELLSPRINGS

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# Torah Wellsprings - Beshalach

## Believe in Yourself

Reb Tzadok HaKohen (*Tzidkas HaTzaddik* 154) writes: "Just as one must believe in Hashem, one must also believe in *himself*. This means to believe that Hashem is interested in him. He must believe that his soul comes from Above, and Hashem has pleasure from him

and has enjoyment when he does Hashem's will. This is the meaning of the *pasuk* (Shmos 14:31) וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ בֹה' וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ, 'And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe...' *Moshe* represents the six-hundred-thousand Yidden of that generation. They believed that Hashem desires them and derives pleasure from them and from the good that's in them<sup>1</sup>."

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1. Baalei mussar write that just as a person must know his weak points, where the yetzer hara is likely to catch him, it is even more important for a person to recognize his strengths. If he doesn't know his strength, he can be compared to a craftsman who doesn't know the tools he has at his disposal.

I heard from a member of our chaburah, a tzaddik and yirei Shamayim, who was recently in Argentina, where a wealthy member of the community took him for a visit at the local zoo. Over there, he saw something shocking. He saw visitors walk up to loose lions and hand-feed them. The lions were docile and treated the humans with respect. The shocked visitor asked his host, "These lions act like young, peaceful children. How is this possible? Lions are ferocious, dangerous animals! How do people get so close, and why don't the lions attack?"

His host answered, "When these lions are born, they are raised together with dogs and fed all that they need. They never discovered that they are lions and that they possess mighty strength. They think they are dogs..."

It is said that elephants and camels also make this mistake. They have immense strength, but they aren't aware of it.

Most people also make the same error. They don't recognize their potential and strengths and are convinced that nothing much will come from them. Especially when surrounded by people who don't accomplish much, they think they won't be different from their peers. The truth is that everyone has amazing strengths, and when one devotes himself to Hashem's service, he can accomplish a lot.



It is hard for people to believe that Hashem wants them because they know their faults. However, faults and errors are part of the creation of the world. This shouldn't prevent us from believing that Hashem wants us.

Let us go through the six days of creation and study what can be viewed as faults in every day:

On the first day of creation, Hashem created a special light, and then Hashem hid it, as Chazal tell us, because it was too good. Hashem didn't want the resha'im to benefit from it.

On the second day of creation, the waters were split, and the lower waters cried, "Why can't we reside in the heavens? Why do we need to be on the lowly earth?"

On the third day of creation, Hashem commanded that the trees themselves should have the taste of their fruit, but the trees didn't obey, and the taste of the tree wasn't like its fruit.

On the fourth day of creation, the moon complained, saying there shouldn't be two prominent luminaries in the sky. Hashem told the moon to become smaller.

On the fifth day of creation, Hashem created the fish, and the female *levyason* was killed and salted because if it lived and multiplied, the world couldn't exist.

On the sixth day of creation, the aveirah of Adam HaRishon and Chava was committed, and they ate from the Tree of Knowledge.

From the very essence of creation, a pattern of imperfection emerged.

Yet after all of that, it states (Bereishis 1:31) וירא אלקים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד "And

Hashem saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good."

This is what Hashem calls good. It is because of imperfections that Hashem created the world. Hashem has pleasure when we overcome the struggles, downfalls, blockades, and hardships and do His will.<sup>2</sup>

So, you can believe in yourself, even if you are imperfect. In fact, your imperfections are the purpose of the entire creation. This trait enables you to bring a nachas ruach to Hashem more than all the malachim in heaven.

Chazal teach: "Reb Eliezer HaGadol said, I testify that whoever studies *Perek Shirah* every day is a *ben Olam HaBa*. He will be saved from damages, the *yetzer hara*, punishment, the Satan, and all types of *mazikim* (demons)."

All of creation praises Hashem, and *Perek Shirah* cites the *pasukim* that each species sings in praise of Hashem. The one who says it daily is a *ben Olam HaBa*.

Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa zy"a asks: Aren't the praises which humans sing greater? So why doesn't Chazal also say, "Whoever says *Az Yashir* every day is a *ben Olam HaBa*"? *Az Yashir* is a praise that humans sang, so it should be more special.

Rebbe Bunim answers that when one sins, he falls to the level of the animals. He becomes like the birds, animals, rodents, and insects of the world. If one continues to praise Hashem even then, its praise is very precious to Hashem.

In *Az Yashir*, we say (15:12) תבלעמו ארץ, "The earth swallowed them up." Rashi writes that we learn from these words that the Mitzrim were brought to burial. They earned this right when Pharaoh said (Shemos 9:27, by

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2. The next pasuk contains the words of kiddush that we say Friday night, ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם. Chazal say that when one recites kiddush Friday night, he becomes a partner with Hashem in creation. Why does he receive this great reward? The answer is that if you can pick yourself up after falling, you deserve to be rewarded immensely.

makas Barad) וה' הצדיק ואני ועמי הרשעים "Hashem is the righteous One and I and my nation are resha'im." The Pnei Menachem zt'l said, "Pharaoh said וה' הצדיק only once, and it was because he was afraid for his life. Soon afterward, he changed his mind. Yet he was rewarded that his nation merited to have a burial. We can, therefore, be certain that we will be rewarded immensely for every good deed we do."

If even the rasha Pharaoh was rewarded for a moment of goodness, we can be confident that we will earn immense rewards for the many mitzvos we perform.

It states (14:4), ... וחזקתי את לב פרעה ורדף אחריהם... "I will strengthen Pharaoh's heart and he will chase after them... and Mitzrayim will know that I am Hashem." We understand from this pasuk that the purpose of *kriyas Yam Suf* was so the Mitzrim should know Hashem. The question is, which Mitzrim is the pasuk referring to? If it refers to the Egyptians who were in Mitzrayim when the sea split, behold, they didn't see *kriyas Yam Suf*! If it refers to the Egyptians who saw *kriyas Yam Suf*, they died a few moments later! So, when it states that the miracles of *kriyas Yam Suf* happened so the Egyptians would know Hashem, which Egyptians is it referring to?

The Ibn Ezra replies that it is both. The Egyptians in Mitzrayim would hear about the miracles of *kriyas Yam Suf* and know Hashem. And the Egyptians who died in the Yam Suf would know Hashem a moment before they perish.<sup>3</sup>

We see from the Ibn Ezra that even a moment of *emunah* is precious. The Mitzrim at the Yam Suf couldn't even tell others what they saw, but for a moment, they recognized Hashem, which was sufficient. For that moment of *emunah*, Hashem split the sea.

With these ideas, we can understand our greatness. Even for the few moments of

good deeds that we do, it is for them that Hashem created the world, and we can believe that we are very precious to Hashem.

It states (Tehillim 106:7) וימרו על ים בים סוף "They sinned by the sea, by the Yam Suf."

Rashi (Tehillim ibid.) writes, "They were at a low level in *emunah*. They said, 'Just as we are coming out of the Yam Suf from one side, the Egyptians will also come up from the Yam Suf from another side, and they will chase after us. So, Hakadosh Baruch Hu hinted to the sea that it should throw out the Mitzrim onto dry land. And then (Shemos 15:30) וירא ישראל את מצרים מת על שפת הים, 'Yisrael saw the Mitzrim dead on the seashore,' and therefore ויאמינו בה, they believed in Hashem. But before they saw this, they didn't believe."

Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zt'l asks that after the Yidden saw the miracles that Hashem performed for them at *kriyas Yam Suf*, how could they rebel against Hashem at this time? Rashi (Tehillim 106:7) writes היו מקטני אמונה, their *emunah* was weak. But how was that possible at such a time?

They witnessed so many miracles by the Splitting of the Sea! *Pirkei Avos* teaches: "Ten miracles happened to our fathers in Mitzrayim, and ten miracles occurred at the sea..." The Ra"v Bartenurah lists the many miracles: The sea split into twelve paths so each tribe could pass individually. The walls turned to ice but were transparent so they could see one other. The bottom dried up, making it easy to walk upon. When one wanted to drink, sweet water came from the walls; when they finished drinking, the water immediately froze, and so on.

So how could they have been rebellious, even while walking through the Yam Suf? At this point, their *emunah* should have been perfect!

Rebbe Moshe Mordechai replied that they believed in Hashem but didn't believe

3. The following are the Ibn Ezra's words: גם הנטבעים לפני מותם, והנשארים, וידעו מצרים כי אני ה'.

in themselves. They didn't believe that they were worthy for Hashem to save them and kill the Mitzrim. It was hard for them to accept that they were so special to Hashem, more than all the nations of the world.

Hashem wanted to redeem us from Mitzrayim, but we lacked merits, so Hashem gave us the mitzvah of *milah*. But there were several Yidden who didn't want to circumcise themselves. As the *Midrash (Shemos Rabba 19)* tells us, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to redeem the Jewish nation [from Mitzrayim], but they didn't have merits. What did Hakadosh Baruch Hu do? He told Moshe, 'Go circumcise them'... But many people refused to be circumcised. Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe to bring a *korban* Pesach. When Moshe brought the *korban* Pesach, Hakadosh Baruch Hu had the four winds of the world blow from Gan Eden, and [they brought the scent of Gan Eden on] Moshe's *korban*. The good fragrance radiated to a forty-day distance radius. People gathered around Moshe and said, "Please let us eat from your *korban* Pesach."

"Moshe replied, 'You may not eat it without a bris *milah*...' They immediately agreed to have a *milah*. The blood of the Pesach mixed with the blood of *milah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu went, took each Yid, kissed him, and blessed him. As it states (Yechezkel 16:6) ואעבר עליך ואראך מתבוססת בדמך ואמר "I passed you and saw you wallowing in your blood, and I said to you, 'With your blood you shall live. I said to you, with your blood you shall live.'"

Notice how quickly their status changed. Only a few moments before, they didn't want the bris *milah*. Soon afterward, Hashem came to each Yid, blessing him and kissing him. This is because the essence of each Yid is pure and good, but it is concealed and needs to be stimulated. This time, the scent of Gan Eden wafting from Moshe's *korban* aroused their desire for spirituality, and they immediately changed their ways.

Just a week before *kriyas* Yam Suf (when the nation was still in Egypt), they were on the 49<sup>th</sup> level of impurity. How did they rise so quickly to the prophetic levels they attained at *kriyas* Yam Suf? How did they rise from the 49<sup>th</sup> gate of impurity to the level of receiving prophecy within a week?

Furthermore, when the Yidden saw the Egyptians chasing after them, they said horrible words to Moshe. They said, "Why did you take us out of Egypt?... We prefer to die in Mitzrayim than to die in the desert." (see *Shemos 14:11-12*). These words were spoken only a few hours before the sea split, and then they rose to the highest levels. Chazal say, "At the Yam Suf, the maidservants saw more than Yechezkel ben Buzi." How did they rise to these levels so quickly?

The *Sfas Emes* explains that this demonstrates the uniqueness of the Jewish nation. They can fall, err, and reach the 49<sup>th</sup> gate, but when their good shines through, they immediately rise to the highest levels (*Sfas Emes, Pesach year 5632*).

### "I am Hashem, Your Healer"

ויאמר אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלקיך (15:26) והישר בעיניו תעשה והאזנת למצותיו ושמרת כל חקיו כל המוחלה אשר שמתו במצרים לא אשים עליך כי אני ה' רפאך "[Hashem] said, 'If you hearken diligently to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, and do what is just in His eyes, give ear to His commandments and observe all His decrees, then any of the diseases that I placed in Egypt, I will not bring upon you, for I am Hashem, your Healer.'"

There seems to be a contradiction in the pasuk. It states that we won't become ill, and afterward, it states *כי אני ה' רפאך*, that Hashem will heal us. Why do we need to be healed if we don't become ill? (See *Rashi*).

The *Yaavutz* explains that there are illnesses within us every day, but Hashem heals us each day so the diseases don't develop and take over the health of the person's body. Hashem promises that we won't become ill because He is always curing

us before we become aware of the illness within us.

The Yaavutz explains that this is the reason we say *וּנְרַפָּא ה' וּנְרַפָּא* every day in *Shemonah Esrei*. We need to daven for a refuah every day, because every day we are ill, and every day Hashem heals us.

The Gemara (Yoma 22:) says *כמה לא חלי ולא מרגיש גברא דמריה סייעיה סמוך ומובטח ואין צריך לחלות ולדאג מכל רעה מי שהקב"ה בעזרו*. This means that if you are a person whom Hashem is helping, you have nothing to worry about. Hashem will take care of all your needs.

Rebbe Pinchas Ustilla zt'l said that we can also translate it as follows: *כמה לא חלי ולא מרגיש*, as long as a person hasn't become ill, *גברא דמריה סייעיה*, he doesn't realize that Hashem is helping him. He takes his health for granted and doesn't recognize that he must praise Hashem for his health.

Rebbe Shlomo Tchortkover zt'l (niftar year 5717) was diagnosed on Tu b'Shvat with the known 'disease.' Growths were found on his body. On Shabbos, parashas Bishalach, he said at his tish, "I never understood the pasuk (15:26) *אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלקיך והישר בעיניו תעשה... כל המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך כי אני ה' רפאך*, "If you hearken diligently to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, and do what is just in His eyes...then any of the diseases that I placed in Egypt, I will not bring upon you, for I am Hashem, your healer.' It seems like a small reward for keeping the entire Torah. Why is not becoming ill considered a valid reward for keeping the Torah? But now I understand that being healthy is the greatest reward. When someone is ill, he is prepared to give away everything he owns to become well. He would pay billions to get better. The pasuk concludes *אני ה' רפאך*, because Hashem is healing us all the time, only we aren't aware of it."

This teaches us two lessons: It reminds us that we should daven that we remain healthy, as Chazal tell us that one should daven that he doesn't become ill. Furthermore,

one should praise Hashem for the health that Hashem gives him.

A child once became ill. The parents, who lived in Eretz Yisrael, brought him to an expert doctor in America. The doctor said that it would cost an enormous price to heal their child. The price was far more than the parents could afford, and they lost hope. The doctors spoke to the child a little, and the child found favor in his eyes. The doctor said to himself, "Because of money, I will let this child die?" He told the parents that he would heal their child for free, and he did so.

When they were ready to return to Eretz Yisrael, now with their healthy son, the father said to the doctor, "I am unable to pay you with money, but if you ever come to Eretz Yisrael and you need something, call me, and I will do whatever I can to help you."

Some years later, the doctor came to Eretz Yisrael, and he was having car trouble in the middle of the night. He remembered that he had a promise from the father of a child he treated that he could call him for any favor. He called him.

At first, the father didn't understand why someone was waking him in the middle of the night, and he responded with harsh words. The doctor told him, "I am the doctor who healed your son. Now I need some help. Won't you help me?"

The lesson is that Hashem does so much kindness to us. He heals us from all our illnesses. There are illnesses within us that we don't even know about, and *baruch Hashem*, we are healthy and cured of them. If Hashem asks something from us, won't we do His request? This is implied in the pasuk, (15:26) *ויאמר אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלקיך... כי אני ה' רפאך*, which can be translated, "You should listen to My voice because I heal you. You owe it to me to do what I ask from you when I ask you for a favor."

Reb Noson Gestetner zt'l said that he was once by a dentist and noticed that the dentist

was a talmid chacham. "You should be a Rav," Reb Gestetner said. "Why are you a dentist?"

The dentist wittily replied, "I used to be a Rav, but no one listened to me. So, I became a doctor. As a doctor, people listen to me."

Reb Gestetner said that this is implied in the words, (15:26) ויאמר אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלקיך... כי אני ה' רפאך, which can be understood that we should listen to Hashem's voice because Hashem is our doctor, and people listen to doctors' commands.

### Parashas HaMon

The Meor Einayim (*Likutim* ד"ה כשרצה) writes, "All salvations can be found in the Torah... For example, if someone needs food, his salvation is concealed in *parashas hamon*. Whoever needs *parnassah* should read *parashas hamon* daily, and he will be *zoche* to *chesed* from *parashas hamon*. Similarly, all other matters are in their place, in the Torah."

Every Shabbos, for twenty-two years, Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Rimanov *zt'l* would teach lessons from *parashas hamon* to bring *parnassah* for Bnei Yisrael.

It is also repeated in the name of Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Rimanov *zt'l* that reading *parashas hamon* on Tuesday of *parashas Beshalach* is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

The Chidushei HaRim writes in a letter: "Rosh Chodesh Nisan, 5612: I thought of an idea that I should make a *chiddush* in *parashas hamon* each day, and thereby my *parnassah* will come from the Torah. As the Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 97:3) states, פרנסה בכל יום, every day has its *parnassah*..."

*Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 1:5) states, טוב לאמר... פרשת המון *parashas hamon*." The Mishnah Berurah writes, "The

Yerushalmi says that whoever says *parashas hamon* daily is guaranteed that he won't ever lack *parnassah*."

The Tashbatz quotes this Yerushalmi and adds ואני ערב, "I guarantee it."

When one says *parashas hamon*, he strengthens his belief that Hashem gives him *parnassah*, and this *emunah* is *mesugal* for attaining *parnassah*.

עומר לגלגלת (16:16) can be translated that the *parnassah* comes לגלגלת from the *emunah* that is in a person's mind.

It states (*Yirmiyahu* 7:28) אבדה האמונה ונכרתה מפיהם, meaning Hashem is complaining that the nation lost their *emunah* (אבדה האמונה). They don't even speak about *emunah*<sup>4</sup> (ונכרתה מפיהם)

The Beis Avraham says that the *pasuk* is hinting, אבדה האמונה, if you lost your *emunah*, ונכרתה מפיהם, food isn't in your mouth. A person might lack *parnassah* and food, *chalilah*, because he lacks *emunah*. This is because *emunah* is *mesugal* for attaining *parnassah*.

Why is there a custom to give birds food on Shabbos Shirah? The Yismach Yisrael explains that when you feed an animal, like your cow or your horse, it feels that it deserves the food. The animal worked for you, so he deserves to be fed. But birds don't do anything. When they are fed, they understand that this is an underserved gift. We, too, seek to attain the awareness that Hashem doesn't owe us anything, and if we have food, we should thank Hashem for His *chesed*.

Furthermore, we can explain that birds raise their heads when they drink. They bend, drink some water, and then lift their heads again. This signifies how we should be when it comes to *parnassah*. We do

4. The Lechovitzer *zt'l* said that talking about *emunah* helps us attain *emunah*. A hint to this idea is in the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 116:10) האמנתי כי אדבר, which can be translated, "I believe because I speak." The words we quote above are another indication. אבדה האמונה ונכרתה מפיהם, which can be translated as, "They lost their *emunah* because they stopped speaking about *emunah*."

hishtadlus, and then raise our heads to heaven to remember that everything is from Him. *Ein od milvado!*

### Developing Bitachon

It was impossible to collect more *mon* than an *omer* per head. If five people were at home, one couldn't bring home more than five *omer*. This is as the pasuk (we quoted above, 16:18) states, ...*וימדו בעמר ולא העדיף המרבה*... "And they measured in an *omer*, and whoever took more had nothing extra..."

It was also impossible to leave over from one day to the next. First of all, it was prohibited to do so, as it states (16:19) *ויאמר משה אלהם איש אל יותר ממנו עד בוקר*, "And Moshe said to them, 'No man may leave over from the [*mon*] until morning.'" Furthermore, it wouldn't help to leave over until the next day because the *mon* would spoil, as it states (16:20, regarding Dasan v'Aviram who left over the *mon* for the next day) *וירם תולעים ויבאש ויקצף עליהם משה*, "And the *mon* became infested with worms and it stank and Moshe became angry with them."

Bnei Yisroel couldn't gather a lot of *mon*, and they couldn't leave over *mon* from one day to the next. This situation worried the people. What will be if *mon* doesn't fall on the following day? Would they and their families go hungry?!

This situation was actually beneficial for the Jewish nation because it taught them to trust in Hashem. The Gemara (Yoma 76.) says, "The students asked Reb Shimon Bar Yochai, 'Why didn't the *mon* fall for the Jewish nation once a year?' Reb Shimon replied, 'I will answer with a mashal: A king had an only son. The king would give him *parnassah* once a year, and the son would only see his father once a year. The king began distributing *parnassah* every day, and his son had to

come daily. The same is true with the Jewish nation. If a person had four or five sons, he was afraid that perhaps tomorrow there would be no *mon*, and they would die from hunger. This brought everyone to devote their heart to their Father in heaven."<sup>5</sup>

The Rabbeinu B'Chaya (introduction to *Beshalach*) writes, "The *man* didn't fall in one day, enough for the upcoming month or two. Each day, the *man* fell enough for that day. Why? To train them in *bitachon*. Every day they had to raise their eyes to their Father in heaven..."

This situation continues to occur in our times. *Parnassah* is always a struggle, for our good, as it trains us to remember Hashem, trust in Him, and pray to Him. In the end, Hashem gives us what we need, each day at the right time.

Rabbeinu b'Chayei teaches that the *mon* began falling before *matan Torah*. This is because the *mon* trained the nation to have *emunah* and *bitachon*, which are the crucial qualities that the Torah wants to teach us.

Rashi (16:1) writes that the Jewish nation ate *matzah*, which they took with them when they left *Mitzrayim*, for one month (from the fifteenth of *Nissan* until the fifteenth of *Iyar*). The following morning (the sixteenth of *Iyar*), the *mon* fell. This was three weeks before *Mattan Torah* (which was on the 6th of *Sivan*). The Rabbeinu b'Chayei explains that this prepared them for *matan Torah*, which is primarily about recognizing Hashem.

It states (16:4) *ויאמר ה' אל משה הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים ויצא העם ולקטו דבר יום ביומו למען אנסנו הילך בתורת אלהים*, "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Behold! - I shall rain down for you food from heaven; let the people go out and pick each day's portion on its day so that I can test whether they will follow My Torah or not.'"

5. The Gemara relates that Reb Shimon bar Yochai told his students two other reasons why the *mon* fell every day. (1) So they could eat the *mon* when it was hot. (2) If a lot fell at once, they would have to work hard carrying it all home.

Rebbe Mendel of Riminov zt'l explains: The Torah clarifies that it will only rain דבר ביום ביומו, enough *mon* for one day. Why is that? The answer is stated in the next words, למען אנחנו: this was a test, to teach the nation that *parnassah* comes from Hashem.

The *pasuk* concludes, הילך בתורת, "to follow My Torah." Because awareness of Hashem is the ultimate purpose of the entire Torah.

The Brisker Rav zt'l received a street in Warsaw as a dowry present from his father-in-law for his chasunah. He was very wealthy at the time, and he hired someone to take care of his money. This person stole all the money.

It was a difficult time for the Brisker Rav, and he reviewed and studied Shaar HaBitachon from the Chovas HaLevavos five or six times. At this time, he said, "I used to think that someone who owns a street in Warsaw is wealthy. Now I know that someone who learns Shaar haBitachon from Chovas HaLevavos five or six times is the wealthy one."

The Brisker Rav zt'l would raise funds each month to help support Torah scholars in Yerushalayim who dedicated their lives to studying Torah. When he didn't raise enough, he borrowed money to pay them. Seeing how difficult it was for the Brisker Rav to raise the money, a wealthy person suggested, "The Rav should find a very wealthy person who can give you a quarter million pounds. That way, you will have peace of mind for a few months."

"Chas Veshalom!" the Brisker Rav replied. "Even if someone would give me millions, I wouldn't accept it. I don't want to earn more than I need for each month."

The Brisker Rav explained that the responsibility to raise the money monthly forced him to turn his eyes heavenward and to trust in Hashem. If he would receive a quarter million pounds, he would have some respite, but he would lose his trust in Hashem.

There were times when people wanted to give the Brisker Rav large sums of money, but he wouldn't accept it. He would tell them, "I already have enough for this month," and he wouldn't take it.

We aren't on this level. If someone would offer us a quarter-million pounds to help us with our financial struggles, most of us would accept it. Nevertheless, we should learn from the Brisker Rav that if we don't have extra money and have tests and *parnassah* struggles, we should take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen our bitachon and trust that Hashem will take care of all our needs.

The *Chovas HaLevavos*, in his introduction to *Shaar HaBitachon*, writes, "Someone who has *bitachon*... will be calm and won't have any worries, similar to a chemist who knows how to turn silver into gold, and how to transform copper into silver. He will be even calmer..."

Based on these words, the Brisker Rav zy"l explained the *pasuk* (Tehillim 27:14) קוה אל ה' חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה' "Trust in Hashem, strengthen your heart, and trust in Hashem." This *pasuk* implies that the reward for having *bitachon* is having more *bitachon*. The Brisker Rav asked, why isn't there a different reward for *bitachon*? Why should the reward for *bitachon* be more *bitachon*?

But the *Chovas HaLevavos* showed us that the calmest and most tranquil person in the world is someone who has *bitachon*, so what reward can possibly be given to someone who has *bitachon*? Should we provide him with wealth? The reward would be far less than the *bitachon* he had before it. Therefore, the only reward for *bitachon* is more *bitachon*.

The Brisker Rav explained this to a wealthy man. The rich man exclaimed enthusiastically, "That's a *gut vort*!"

The Brisker Rav asked him, "If it is good, perhaps you should also follow its advice. Perhaps you should do less business and dedicate more time to learning Torah?"

The man didn't want to do this. He enjoyed hearing about the greatness of *bitachon*, but he wasn't ready to follow this path for himself.

The Brisker Rav told him a story that happened to his father, Reb Chaim of Brisk zt"l:

A *meshulach* was away from his home for half a year collecting money. He gave the money he raised for the tzedakah he was working for and kept a percentage for himself. He was in Brisk, just about ready to return home when he realized that he lost his share of the money. He ran to Reb Chaim Brisker, crying hysterically. Half a year of hard work was lost. What would he do?

Reb Chaim told him that he knew how he lost the money. He reminded the *meshulach* that he had gone to a store to buy a suit. "Apparently, when you took off your clothing to try on the suit, someone stole the money."

The man began to cry some more.

Reb Chaim said, "Come back in a few days. I will raise the money and give you the amount you lost."

A few days later, Reb Chaim, renowned for his charitable deeds, gave the *meshulach* even more than he originally had. The *meshulach* was grateful. But now he was also ashamed that he had cried so bitterly over money. So, he said to Reb Chaim, "It wasn't the lost money which upset me. I was mostly upset with *myself*. I felt like a fool because I was so negligent with the money. That is why I was so upset. But it wasn't the money..." He was embarrassed to admit that he had made such a scene over money.

Reb Chaim said, "Oh? That was the problem? I thought you were crying over the money. Well, if that's the case, you can leave the money with me. I have people who could use it..."

The man shouted from the depths of his heart, "But Rebbe! I need the money!"

The Brisker Rav said to the wealthy person, who wasn't ready to live a life of *bitachon*, "What you just said is similar to this story. You say that it is a nice *vort*, as though you are sincerely interested in the virtue of *bitachon*, and then you shout, '*ober gelt!*' (But I need money)."<sup>6</sup>

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6. The Alter of Novardok zt"l toiled to acquire perfect *bitachon*. His approach was to trust in Hashem without doing hishtadlus. Once, he arrived at a city after nightfall. He needed a place to stay but refused to ask for help. He placed his trust in Hashem. Having no choice, he went to *beis medresh* to study Torah. No one knew he needed a place to stay, so they didn't offer. Eventually, the *beis medresh* emptied, and he remained alone.

That night, a wealthy man was unable to sleep. He decided he might as well get some fresh air, and went for a walk. He passed the *beis medresh* and found the Alter of Novardok sitting and learning Torah. The wealthy person invited him to sleep at his home, and the Alter gladly obliged. When the rich person heard why the Alter refused to ask for help, he laughed and said, "That's ridiculous. If it weren't that I couldn't sleep tonight, you would still be there!"

He didn't realize the miracle he just witnessed. The Alter of Novardok trusted in Hashem, and Hashem disturbed the sleep of the wealthy person so that the Alter would have a place to sleep.

Another story is told about the Alter of Novardok and his advanced level of *bitachon*. He once needed to travel by train but didn't have money to buy a ticket. Nevertheless, He went to the train station, trusting that Hashem would help him.

The train arrived, and the Alter remained seated, waiting for Hashem's salvation. The whistle blew. This was a sign that the train was getting ready to leave, but the Alter remained in his place. The whistle blew again. Someone came by and teased the Alter for thinking that he would still get onto the train. The Alter

## Hishtadlus and Bitachon

The Mishnah Berurah (1:13) writes, "It isn't sufficient to just say the words of *Parashas hamon*. One must think about what he is saying and recognize Hashem's wonders. It states there (16:18), המרבה לא העדיף והממעט לא החסיר, 'Whoever took more had nothing extra and whoever took less was not lacking.'<sup>7</sup> We learn from the *mon* that doing a lot of hishtadlus doesn't help.

The *mon* that fell is called rain, as it states (16:4) הגני ממיטיר לכם לחם מן השמים "Behold! - I shall rain down for you food from heaven..."

Rain cannot be controlled. If one wants more rain, there is nothing one can do to bring it (aside from *tefillah*). Similarly, it was impossible to increase the amount of *mon* - or the amount of *parnassah* - that falls. People think that if they work more, they will have more money. The Torah tells us that *parnassah* is like rain, which cannot be controlled. We do *hishtadlus*, but the amount that Hashem

decides will always be - not a drop less or more.

Rebbe Moshe Lelover *zt'l* owned a store where he sold salt. Someone opened another salt store on the opposite side of the street. Rebbe Moshe wasn't afraid that this would take away his *parnassah*.

Once, the competitor overslept, and Rebbe Moshe knocked on his window and said, "Come quickly. People are already waiting for you in your store."

This is because Rebbe Moshe believed that no one could take away the *parnassah* he was destined to receive. Even a competitor can't take away the money due to him.

The Yesod HaAvodah would tell his chassidim who were merchants that they should come late on market day. In this way, he trained them to believe that *parnassah* comes from Hashem and that working more hours won't increase the *parnassah*.<sup>8</sup>

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remained steadfast in his faith that Hashem would help him. The whistle blew a third time. This meant that the train would begin moving any second. At that moment, someone ran over and bought a ticket for the Alter, and they both jumped onto the train just in time.

The man who mocked the Alter said, "You act foolishly. If you would have delayed just a moment longer, you could have missed the train."

He didn't realize that in the merit of the Alter's *bitachon*, Hashem helped him get on just in time.

We repeat these stories to show that *bitachon* works. When one has *bitachon*, Hashem helps him.

7. Rashi (16:17) writes, "Some collected a lot of *mon*, and some collected little, and when they got home, they measured what they collected and discovered that the person who collected a lot didn't have more than an *omer* for each member of his tent, and the one who collected a little didn't have less than an *omer* per person. This was a great miracle that occurred with the *man*."

8. Rebbe Shmuel of Lubavitch *zt'l* asked someone, "You're a Yid, and you know about Shabbos. Why do you work on this day?"

He replied, רבי, שבת איז א פעטע שטיקל, "Rebbe! Shabbos is a fat piece." He earned a large salary on Shabbos. He didn't want to give that up.

The Rebbe replied, "The halachah of מחריר ללב (*Devarim* 23:19) means that if you exchange a dog for a sheep, you may not sacrifice the sheep as a *korban*. However, if one receives a sheep in exchange for a donkey (or any other animal), he may sacrifice the sheep. This is because a dog is disgusting. When a dog sees a fat piece of meat, he forgets his loyalty to his master and is interested only in the meat. The dog's disloyalty is so disgusting that even its exchange cannot be sacrificed as a *korban*. Think about whom you resemble when you are disloyal to Hashem and run after *fat pieces*."

The Shach (1621-1662, one of the primary commentaries on *Shulchan Aruch*) was supported by his father-in-law for the first few years after his *chasunah*. When the father-in-law's commitment to financial support concluded, he said to his illustrious son-in-law, "Market day is approaching. Here's some money. See what you can do with it."

The Shach did business with the money and was very successful.

Another market day was approaching. His father-in-law approached him again and said, "You did so well last time. I'm sure you will do well this time, too."

The Shach responded that he doesn't want to do business again. He explained that it states in this week's *parashah* (15:9): אָמַר אֹיֵב אֶרְדּוּף אֲשֵׁיג. The אֹיֵב, the enemy is the *yetzer hara* (because our greatest enemy is the *yetzer hara*). The *yetzer hara* says, אֶרְדּוּף אֲשֵׁיג, that he will capture *talmidei chachamim* in his trap. How will he do that? אֶחָלֵק שְׁלָל, The *yetzer hara* distributes wealth to the *talmidei chachamim*. He causes the *talmid chacham's* initial attempt at business to be very successful, and now the *talmid chacham* will invest a lot of his time and efforts towards becoming wealthy. Now that he has fallen into the *yetzer hara's* trap and is busy doing business instead of learning Torah the *yetzer hara* then empties out his pockets and makes him poor. This is alluded to in the words אָרִיק חֲרָבִי תוֹרִישְׁמוּ יָדֵי. The translation of אָרִיק is to empty, and תוֹרִישְׁמוּ is from the root רָשׁ, poor. The *yetzer hara* empties his pockets and makes him poor, and then he loses out on both worlds.

There were three very wealthy merchants, *baalei tzedakah*, in Istanbul, and almost everyone admired them. However, the smaller merchants in the same field felt that the monopoly of these businessmen took away their chance to make a living. They told Reb Chaim Palagi *zt'l*, "They take away almost every opportunity we have to earn *parnassah*."

Reb Chaim Palagi corrected them, "No one can take away your *parnassah*. Hashem

gives each person the amount of money that is destined from heaven. It is even possible that they are helping you out in your *parnassah*. It is possible that in the merit of *tzedakah*, everyone in Istanbul receives *parnassah*."

Eventually, the three philanthropists closed their businesses and moved to Eretz Yisrael. The smaller merchants rejoiced, thinking they would now succeed in their business.

But within a year, the smaller merchants lost all their money. They saw it as Reb Chaim Palagi had told them: The wealthy people weren't taking away their *parnassah*. They had *parnassah* in the merit of the *tzedakah* those philanthropists gave.

They discovered that Hashem gives *parnassah*, and everything is in His hands.

A chasid of the Baal HaTanya sold bundles of sticks to be used for firewood. When he took inventory of his stock, he would count the number of bundles he had in his storage and when he was about to complete the inventory and total everything up, he would stop counting and say, "*Ein od milvado*", there is no one but Hashem. He wanted to remind himself that it wasn't the number of bundles he had that would give him *parnassah*. Everything is from Hashem.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe *zt'l* repeated this story and asked, so why did the chassid count the bundles of sticks? He could have trusted in Hashem without knowing any amount of bundles at all.

The Rebbe replied that the way of his Rebbe, the Baal HaTanya, was that we shouldn't behave in a way that disregards this world. That isn't the ultimate level and purpose. Rather, Hashem wants us to live in this world and make this world holy for Hashem. So, we count, and then we proclaim, *ein od milvado*, to remember that *parnassah* is from Hashem.

When the Yidden stood before the sea, they panicked because the Mitzrim were

running after them from behind. Moshe told them (14:14) ה' ילחם לכם ואתם תחרשו. Literally this means, "Hashem shall make war for you [and will split the sea for you], and you shall remain silent."

However, Rebbe Meir Premishlaner zt'l, in his holy witty manner, said that ילחם can mean "to give bread," and תחרשו can mean to plow. Thus, the pasuk is saying, "Hashem will give you bread. You plow." Do your hishtadlus, but parnassah will come from Hashem.<sup>9</sup>

### The Loss of Improper Hishtadlus

The Torah tells us that Dasan v'Aviram saved over *mon* for the next day. They didn't receive more than an *omer* per head, like everyone else. It was impossible to take more or less, so their solution was to eat less today so some *mon* would be left over for tomorrow. It was important to them so they

could be assured that there would be food for themselves and their families tomorrow.

However, the Torah tells us that their plan failed. (16:20) וירם תולעים ויבאש "[The *mon*] became infested with worms and it stank..."

It didn't help them to save for the next day. Whatever was left over was spoiled. They didn't gain anything. They only lost because on the previous day, they ate less, so they could leave over for the next day, and whatever they left over spoiled.

But they lost even more than that. The next pasuk (16:21) states, וילקטו אתו בבקר בבקר איש, "They gathered it morning by morning, each man according to what he eats..."

The simple translation of this pasuk refers to Klal Yisrael, telling us that they would gather the *mon* each day. However, the Malbim says that just as pasuk (16:20) refers to Dasan v'Aviram, telling us that they left

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9. Reb Mendel lives in Yerushalayim and supports his large family by dealing in antique *sefarim*. His primary *hishtadlus*, though, is his *bitachon* and *tefillos*. As the Ramchal (*Derech Hashem* 4:5) writes, "A person should stand before Hashem Yisbarach to ask all his needs and trust in Him. This is the first and the primary *hishtadlus*..."

On the night before his daughter's *chasunah*, Reb Mendel gathered his family and told them that he needed twenty-five thousand dollars for the night of the *chasunah* and that he had no idea how to get it. "But I'm not worried. I trust in Hashem. Hashem will help..."

While the family was still converged around him, Shimon, an antique dealer for rare *sefarim*, knocked on his door and asked whether he had any new antiques for sale.

Reb Mendel replied, "Actually, I recently bought a three-hundred-year-old *Rambam* for fifty dollars. Clearly, a scholar once owned it, as it has handwritten notes along the margins. I tried to figure out who this scholar was but was unsuccessful. Without knowing the scholar's name, the set doesn't have any retail value. In fact, I offered it to someone for fifty dollars, but he declined."

Shimon perused the *sefer*, and by Shimon's expressions, it was clear that he thought he knew who originally owned the *sefer*.

Reb Shimon asked for permission to take the *Rambam* home so he could further research the matter.

Reb Mendel and Reb Shimon agreed that one-sixth of the sale price would go to Reb Shimon.

Shimon discovered that this *Rambam* had belonged to the Pri Chadash. (He deduced that by the handwriting and by the very same *chiddushim* that are also printed in the Pri Chadash). The next morning, Shimon brought the *Rambam* to a collector, who paid thirty thousand dollars for the set. Shimon kept a sixth for himself (five thousand dollars) and gave twenty-five thousand dollars to Reb Mendel, the amount he needed for his daughter's *chasunah*, to be held later that day.

over *mon* and it spoiled, this pasuk (16:21) also refers to Dasan v'Aviram. Because the Malbim notes that this time it states איש כפי אכלו, previously, it states איש לפי אכלו. The translation of כפי אכלו means "according to how much they ate yesterday."

The Malbim explains that the Torah tells us that Dasan v'Aviram didn't bring home an *omer* like everyone else. כפי אכלו, as much as they had eaten on the day that they left over the *mon*, that is the amount they ate every day. They ate less on the day they left over *mon*, because they wanted the leftovers to eat the next day. And that was the amount that they ate every day. It became their daily ration. Now, each day, they are איש כפי אכלו, the amount they had eaten on that day.

The pasuk concludes, וחם השמש ונמס, "The sun grew hot and it melted." According to the standard translation, this refers to the *mon* of the Jewish nation. As Rashi writes, "Whatever was left in the field, melted..." They gathered the *mon* early because later in the day, when the sun shone brightly, the *mon* in the field melted.<sup>10</sup>

According to the Malbim, the words וחם השמש refer to Dasan v'Aviram. Even the *mon* in their homes melted when the sun came out. They couldn't eat lunch or supper.

They had *mon* for breakfast, and nothing remained. Later in the day, the *mon* melted.

The next pasuk states ויהי ביום השישי לקטו להם לחם, "It happened on the sixth day that they gathered a double portion of food, two *omer* for each person..."

According to the Malbim, once again, this pasuk refers to Dasan v'Aviram. They were punished during the weekdays. They couldn't receive an entire *omer*, only כפי אכלו, the amount they ate on that day that they left over for the next day. And they had to eat everything in the morning because, by around ten o'clock, when the sun shone brightly, the *mon* in their homes melted. However, on Shabbos, even Dasan v'Aviram had two *omers* of *mon* per person. It didn't melt; they had enough for Shabbos.<sup>11</sup>

### Joy on Shabbos Shirah

After maariv on Shabbos Shirah, Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa zt'l repeated a question he heard from Reb Yitzchak Vorka zt'l. Reb Yitzchak Vorka asked, "Why is this Shabbos called Shabbos Shirah? We generally don't name the Shabbos after what we read in the Torah. Last week's Shabbos (parashas Bo) isn't called 'Shabbos Yetzias Mitzrayim,' and next week's Shabbos (parashas Yisro) isn't called

10. Rabbeinu b'Chayei says that if someone didn't collect early in the morning, people would give him a portion from theirs, and that is how they performed the mitzvah of tzedakah in the desert.

11. There was a *bachur* in the Chofetz Chaim's yeshivah who was turning down one *shidduch* offer after the next. He insisted that he would only agree to a *shidduch* if the girl's parents agreed to support him for five years.

The Chofetz Chaim asked him, "Hopefully, you will live for many years. Who will support you after five years pass?"

"Who will support me?" the *bachur* asked incredulously, "Hashem will support me!"

"If you believe that Hashem will support you for most of your life, why don't you believe that Hashem can support you for the first five years of your marriage as well?"

The Chofetz Chaim explained that Dasan and Aviram made the same error. They feared that on the following day, the *mon* wouldn't fall. This is why they saved *mon* for the next day. But what did they expect to eat on the day after that? They would need to trust in Hashem, so they may as well have trusted in Hashem immediately.

'Shabbos Matan Torah.' Why, then, is this Shabbos called Shabbos Shirah?"

Rebbe Bunim answered that it is because the Shirah is written in the sefer Torah לבינה על גבי אריה. [Az Yashir is written in the sefer Torah in a song format, with large spaces after each phrase.]

Then Rebbe Bunim said with hislahavus, "Every Yid must be very happy on this Shabbos!"

The Ramasayim Tzofim zt'l (Tana d'bei Elyahu Zuta 16) offers the following explanation:

It is based on the Shlah Hakadosh, who says that the ink of a sefer Torah represents the neshamos, the good deeds, the emunah, and the daas of the Jewish nation. The white of a sefer Torah represents the physical bodies of Bnei Yisrael.<sup>12</sup>

He explains that when we read about yetzias Mitzrayim in the Torah, the typical Yid doesn't experience the joy of yetzias Mitzrayim, and when we read about matan Torah, the average Yid doesn't experience the incredible joy of matan Torah. Tzaddikim do experience the joy; however, the average Yid doesn't. This is why we don't call last Shabbos "Shabbos Yetzias Mitzrayim" and next Shabbos "Shabbos Matan Torah."

However, when we read Az Yashir, every Yid can experience the joy of kriyas Yam Suf. There are many white spaces between the stanzas, which means that the bodies of Bnei Yisrael also experience it. The human mind and heart experience the joy of kriyas Yam Suf. It can therefore be called Shabbos

Shirah. It is a joy that everyone can experience.

This is why Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa urged every Yid to be happy on this Shabbos. This is a joy that everyone can relate to.

Rashi (Shemos 12:6) writes that for the Jewish nation to leave Mitzrayim, they needed mitzvos, so Hashem gave them the mitzvos of korban Pesach and *bris milah*. The Avnei Nezer asks why a mitzvah wasn't required to merit kriyas Yam Suf. He answers that the Jewish nation served Hashem with mesirus nefesh; they believed in Hashem and walked directly into the deep sea, and when there is mesirus nefesh, no other merit is needed.

The Tzemech Tzedek of Lubavitz zt'l referred to Shvi'i shel Pesach (the day we read the Shirah) as Rosh Hashanah for *mesirus nefesh*." The same applies to Shabbos Shirah.

The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l taught that the word א"ז from א"ז ישיר hints at the two days a year we read the Shirah. The letter ז"ן is gematriya seven, alluding to Shevi'i shel Pesach, and א"ל"ף can be translated as to teach or to study (אלופך בינה), alluding to Shabbos Shirah when we learn about *kriyas Yam Suf*. These are days we commemorate the mesirus nefesh of the Jewish nation.<sup>13</sup>

Chazal tell us, "Even a maidservant at the Yam Suf saw greater revelations than the Navi Yechezkel ben Buzi." This teaches us the power of serving Hashem with *mesirus nefesh*. In a moment, a *mesirus nefesh* Yid is elevated from the lowest to the highest levels.

12. יש שישים רבוי אותיות לתורה is "There are six-hundred-thousand letters in the Torah," corresponding to the 600,000 souls of Bnei Yisrael. A sefer Torah consists of black ink over white parchment. The ink represents the neshamos of Bnei Yisrael, and the white spaces represent the bodies.

13. Tzaddikim say that when one serves Hashem with mesirus nefesh, beyond his nature, he will merit miracles beyond nature.

We received a letter from a couple who was childless for many years, and they decided to do something beyond their nature to merit Hashem's salvation. They threw away their iPhones, which was a very difficult step for them. It was mesirus nefesh, but they prayed that in that merit, Hashem would perform miracles for them beyond nature. They were indeed blessed with a child.