

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Terumah



Torah WELLSPRINGS

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Torah Wellsprings - Terumah

Bitachon Brings Salvations

It states (25:18-20) והיו כרבים זהב.... "You shall make two golden keruvim... The keruvim shall have their wings spread upwards..."

Chazal tell us that the word כרובים comes from the words כרביא, "like children." This is because the faces on the *keruvim* appeared like two young children. The Divrei Binah says that the young faces on the keruvim were to represent the merit of bitachon. It states (Tehillim 131:2) אִם לֹא שׁוֹיֵיתִי וְדוֹמָמִתִּי נַפְשִׁי כְּגִמְלָה עָלַי נַפְשִׁי "I swear that I stilled and silenced my soul like a suckling child at his mother's side like the suckling child is my soul." Dovid HaMelech says that he stilled and silenced his soul, and he was calm and unworried because he trusted in Hashem like a young, nursing child who relies on his mother to feed him.¹

The Malbim writes, "A nursing child places his entire trust on his mother to feed him and to take care of him, so do I place my entire trust on Hashem. A nursing child doesn't trust in himself at all because the child knows that he is weak and unable to do anything, so do I know that I am weak and unable to do anything on my own. The next pasuk explains whom he trusts: יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלֶּה 'Yisrael trusts in Hashem.' Hashem teaches and leads us like a mother takes care of her children. We aren't like infants who only need their mothers when they are small. Yisrael trusts and relies on Hashem מְעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם, 'for this time and forever.'"

This outstanding level of bitachon is represented by the keruvim.

The Divrei Yisrael of Modzhitz zt'l says that also the menorah teaches us a lesson in bitachon. It states (25:31) תִּיעָשָׂה הַמְנוֹרָה. The nekudos on these words indicate that the menorah was made on its own.²

Rashi writes, תִּיעָשָׂה הַמְנוֹרָה implies that the menorah was made on its own. לפי שהיה משה מתקשה בה "Moshe was having difficulty [understanding how it should be made]. Hakadosh Baruch Hu told him, "Throw the *kikar* [of gold] into the fire, and it will be made on its own."

Kikar reminds us of *kikar lechem*, a loaf of bread, representing parnassah. Using Rashi's words, Moshe was מתקשה בה, "having difficulty with it." This alludes to parnassah that many people are מתקשה בה, have difficulty earning a living. So Hashem commanded that they throw the *kikar* into the fire, and it will be made on its own. Hashem says, "Throw your worries and needs on Me, and I will make your parnassah for you." Trust in Hashem, and you will have parnassah.

Hashem told Moshe to throw the *kikar* into אש, fire. א"ש is roshei teivos for אמונה, have perfect emunah in Hashem and you will have parnassah.

It states (Orach Chaim 694:3), "We aren't particular when it comes to money for Purim. כל מי שפושט יד לטול נותנים לו, whoever puts out his hand to receive, we give him."

We can translate, כל הפושט יד, whoever removes his hand from the situation, and

1. When someone asked the Vilna Gaon zt'l to describe bitachon, the Vilna Gaon responded that Dovid HaMelech already described it with the words אִם לֹא שׁוֹיֵיתִי וְדוֹמָמִתִּי נַפְשִׁי כְּגִמְלָה עָלַי אִם לֹא שׁוֹיֵיתִי וְדוֹמָמִתִּי נַפְשִׁי כְּגִמְלָה עָלַי. It is to trust in Hashem as an infant relies on his mother.

The Sfas Emes said, "No simcha can compare to the joy of the person who trusts in Hashem."

2. If Moshe made the menorah, it would state תִּיעָשָׂה.

knows that everything is from Hashem, ונתנים לו, Heaven gives him.

Many people say that they understand how they manage their minor expenses of day-to-day living, but they don't know how they will handle the more significant expenses that come up from time to time, such as when they have to marry off children. The Shinover Rav zt'l said that he understands how people marry off children but doesn't understand how they manage the day-to-day expenses. He understands how people marry off children. They know that they can't manage on their own, so they trust in Hashem, and Hashem helps them. However, they think they can manage the day-to-day living on their own. So, for daily life, they don't trust in Hashem. Therefore, for everyday living, without trust in Hashem, how do they manage?

There's a Midrash that discusses the difference between small and large chickens. When a chicken is small, its mother feeds it and cares for it. When the chicken is large, the mother doesn't care for it anymore. She even pecks at her children and banishes them away when there is food that the mother wants to eat alone.

The Vilna Gaon zt'l says that the same occurs with people. When they are young, they trust in Hashem, and Hashem takes care of them. When they get older, they think they can support themselves, and then they lose the special hashgachah pratis that they once had.

This is also alluded to in the Gemara (Bava Kama 92:) "People say, 'When we were young, we were like men. When we become older, we are like children.'" Rashi writes, "We were respected like adults when we were young. When we become older, we become small and unimportant like children." The

explanation can be that when we were young, we trusted in Hashem, so Hashem cared for us. But when we become older, we think we can fend for ourselves, and we lose this benefit.

Some people are successful; they seem to manage on their own, but that benefit becomes their disadvantage. The more they know they are entirely dependent on Hashem, the greater their success.

Rebbe Yechezkel of Kozhmir zt'l says that animals give birth without tzaar because they don't have a midwife to help them. Animals rely entirely on Hashem, and therefore, Hashem helps them.

The following pasuk seems contradictory. It states (Tehillim 9:19), *כי לא לנצח ישכח אביון*, "For the poor shall not be forgotten eternally." This means that eventually, Hashem will help the poor. They go through hard times, but in the end, Hashem will help them. They are not forgotten, *chalilah*. The pasuk concludes, *תקות עניים תאבד לעד*, "The hope of the poor is forever lost." From these words, there seems to be no hope for them!³

We can explain that the pasuk says Hashem will certainly support and help the poor. Only, *תקות עניים*, the poor had a particular matter and means which they thought would help them receive their *parnassah*. *תאבד לעד*, that resource is lost forever. Hashem will support them in another way. The poor person thought: "My wealthy uncle will help me." Or "I will speak with this and this wealthy person, and all my problems will be resolved." *תקות עניים*, the poor people's hope, *תאבד לעד*, are lost forever. They don't occur. And Hashem helps them in other ways.

3. Rashi and Metzudas Dovid answer that the word *לא* written at the beginning of the pasuk is used for both phrases. It is as if it states, *כי לא לנצח ישכח אביון*, "For the poor shall not be forgotten eternally." *תקות עניים לא תאבד לעד*, "The hope of the poor won't be lost forever."

Emunah Brings Salvations

Chazal (Shabbos 31.) say, אמונת זה סדר זרעים, emunah is the tractate of seeds.⁴ A seed sprouts forth salvations, as we say in Shacharis, מצמיח ישועות, that Hashem sprouts forth salvations. מצמיח generally refers to when something sprouts from a seed. The salvations grow from the seed of emunah.

Before birchas hachodesh, people want to know when the *molad* will be. Some prepare themselves before Shacharis. They ask, "When is the *molad* this month?" Some check the calendar. Indeed, the siddur states, נכון, "It is proper for one to know when the *molad* is before he says *birkas hachodesh*."

It is נכון לידע, "proper to know," but when it comes to knowing Hashem, it is an obligation from the Torah, as it states (Devarim 4:39), "וידעת היום והשבת אל לבבך כי ה' הוא האלקים", "You shall know this day and take to your heart that Hashem, He is the G-d." We are obligated to know and review the Emunah. It isn't sufficient to know it in our subconscious. It needs constant reminders and reviews. And with this emunah, we will merit salvations.

Praising Hashem brings Salvations

The Zera Shimshon (Beshalach 24) points out that when you spell out נ"ס in full like this: נו"ן סמ"ך, the added letters (called מילוי) also spell נ"ס. There is a second נ' in נו"ן, and the letters סמ"ך in סמ"ך are gematria 60, the same as נ"ס. So, within נ"ס, there is another נ"ס. He explains that when you praise Hashem for the miracle that occurred to you, you become a worthy candidate for another miracle.

The sefarim write this idea on the words (Tehillim 60:6) נס להתנוסס, one miracle draws down another one. Praising Hashem for the miracles makes us worthy of more miracles.

Many times, Chazal use the expression נס בתוך נס, one miracle within another miracle. The Zera Shimshon explains that this also alludes to our lesson. Within the miracle is the potential for additional miracles to develop.

He explains that therefore when one praises Hashem for miracles and he says birchas *hagomel*, the tzibbur replies מי שגמלך כל טוב הוא יגמלך כל טוב סלה. We are wishing unto him more miracles. This is because since he experienced one miracle, he has potential for more.

The Gemara (Brachos 54.) tells us that when Mar brei d'Ravina was in Arovos, he was thirsty, and miraculously, a well was created for him to quench his thirst. He was also in Riska d'Mechuza, and a wild camel attacked him there. Miraculously, a wall of a house fell, and he was able to save himself by running into the house.

The Gemara says that when he was in Riska d'Mechuza, he would say a brachah to praise Hashem for saving him from the camel and the thirst, and when he was in Aravos, he also praised Hashem for both miracles.

This is brought down in halachah. When a miracle happens to a person, and he returns to that place, he says the brachah שעשה ברוך... שפעלה, praising Hashem for the miracle that occurred. And if he experienced two or more miracles in his lifetime, when he praises Hashem for the miracles that occurred at that location, he should

4. The Gemara refers to the pasuk (Yeshayah 33:6) אמונת עתיך חוסן ישועות חכמת ודעת. These six words represent the six orders of Mishnayos. The first word אמונת, represents Seder Zeraim. עתיך represents חוסן, מועד, is Seder Nashim, ישועות is Seder Nezikin, חכמת is Seder Kodshim, and דעת is Seder Taharos.

Rashi explains that Seder Zeraim is represented by אמונת because Seder Zeraim deals with the obligation of tithing his produce, and one needs emunah in Hashem to do so without fearing that this will cause him to lose money.

simultaneously praise Hashem for all his other salvations he experienced.

The Zera Shimshon explains that this is because all salvations are connected. When you praise Hashem for one salvation, it opens the channels for additional miracles.

However, if he doesn't praise Hashem for a miracle, he is *kafuy tovah* and won't receive the next miracle.

There is also the concept of praising Hashem before the miracle occurred, and that will bring down the miracle he is waiting for.

The Midrash associates the words (25:2) ויקחו לי תרומה, "Take for Me a donation," with the words (Mishlei 4:2) כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם, "For I gave you good teaching." What is the connection? The Brezhaner Rav zt'l explains that these two pasukim teach us the same lesson. When one praises Hashem, even before the salvations come, he will merit yeshuos. כי לקח טוב, if you want to receive good, נתתי לכם, think of it as if I have already given it to you. Therefore, נתתי לכם is written in past tense. Consider it like you have already received the goodness. This is also implied in ויקחו לי תרומה, Rashi writes לי לשמי. So ויקחו לי תרומה means if you elevate Hashem's name by praising Him, ויקחו, you take salvation for yourself.

The concept is that when you praise Hashem even before the salvation comes, you will merit to see it happen.

Shabbos Brings Yeshuos

In the parshiyos of Beshalach, Yisro, and Mishpatim, we find advice on how to merit *refuah*.

In parashas Beshalach, it states (15:26), ויאמר אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלקיך... ושמרת כל חוקיו כל המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך כי אני ה' רופאך, "If you hearken to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, and do what is proper in His eyes, and listen closely to His commandments and observe all His statutes, all the sicknesses

that I have visited upon Egypt I will not visit upon you, for I, Hashem, heal you."

Reb Itzikel of Skver zt'l said that this is a difficult remedy (שארפע רעצעפט) because one must first keep the entire Torah and then he attains a *refuah*.

In parashas Yisro, we learn that everyone was healed when the nation received the Torah. But that is also a difficult prescription for a *refuah* because it entailed the acceptance of the yoke of the entire Torah.

But in parashas Mishpatim, an easier method is given. It states (21:19), רק שבתו יתן, ורפא ירפא, all one needs to do is שבתו יתן, to keep Shabbos, ורפא ירפא and he will have a *refuah*.

The Shem MiShmuel (*Shelach* 5677) writes in the name of his father, the Avnei Nezer zt'l, "Even if someone has an ill person in his home if he can refrain from complaining and from thinking about his troubles on Shabbos, the sick person will certainly be healed." This is based on the Gemara (*Shabbos* 12.), "When one visits the sick on Shabbos he says, שבת היא מליצוק ורפואה קרובה לבוא, 'Shabbos we don't shout, and the *refuah* is quick in coming,' and Rashi explains, "The merit of Shabbos can bring you compassion if you honor Shabbos by refraining from feeling *tzaar* on this day."

The Gemara discusses an ill person. However, the same applies to all kinds of troubles and problems. If one doesn't have *tzaar* on Shabbos, the *tzaar* will disappear.

The Eliyahu Rabba says that this is *midah kneged midah*. He doesn't feel distress on Shabbos, so Hashem removes all *tzaar* from him.

Chazal require that on Shabbos it should be כאילו כל מלאכתך עשויה (Rashi, *Shemos* 20:), as if you aren't lacking anything in your life. When you have that feeling on Shabbos, it becomes your reality, even after Shabbos passes. Everything will be perfect for you in your life.

Masuk m'Dvash (Reb Yitzchak Parchi 6) writes, "We saw with our own eyes people who had a *tzarah* before Shabbos, and on Shabbos, they forgot about their *tzarah* entirely, and were happy with Shabbos, as it is proper on Shabbos...they merited to be saved from their troubles in miraculous ways."

In his later years, Reb Yaakov Yosef Herman came to live in Eretz Yisrael with his entire family. He traveled by ship with all his possessions, arrived at the port close to Shabbos, and couldn't take his luggage to his lodgings. He knew he might lose all his possessions, but he and his wife refused to be sad or worried over Shabbos.

They didn't rush to the port at the earliest *zman* when Shabbos was over. Instead, they waited for the *zman* of Rabbeinu Tam, like they did every week, and then headed out to the port.

Over there, they found a guard standing near their bags. "They told me to stand here," he told them. All their belongings were there; nothing was missing. Because when you are happy on Shabbos, all troubles disappear.

The Menoras HaMaor (אלנאקר"ה, ח"ב פ"ח) writes a story of a woman who had two children who fell into a deep pit on Shabbos. She waited until her husband came home from the beis knesses. When he arrived, they ate and drank, and when they finished the meal, she said, "If you want, I will tell you something."

"Go ahead."

She said, "For ten years, I was guarding two gold crowns. Now, the owners are asking for the crowns back. What should I do? Should I return them?"

"Return them."

She said, "Your two sons fell into a pit and died. Now honor Hashem and don't be *mechalel* Shabbos by being sad today."

They weren't sad that Shabbos. When it turned dark, they went to the pit to take their children out and bury them. Lo and behold, their children were alive and well! They didn't have *tzaar* on Shabbos, so they merited this *nes*.

Shevet HaKahasi (vol.3 180) writes that Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* didn't put on new shoes on Shabbos. He first wore them during the weekdays so that they would be broken into before Shabbos. He didn't want to feel the pinch of wearing new Shabbos shoes. We should also seek to avoid feeling any distress on Shabbos. Shabbos is (*Bamidbar* 10:10), *יום שמחתכם*, a day of joy, and when we are happy on Shabbos, the *tzaros* will disappear and never return.

Turn Your Home into a Mishkan

This week's parashah discusses the building of the Mishkan. We want every Jewish home to be a sanctuary where Hashem resides.

The Gemara tells (*Bechoros* 7) about a debate between Reb Yehoshua ben Chananya with apikorsim called Saba d'bei Atuna, the wise men of Athens. The wise men of Athens asked Reb Yehoshua ben Chananya, "Where is the middle of the world?"

Reb Yehoshua pointed to "here" and said, "This is the middle of the world."

They asked, "How do you know?"

He replied, "Bring ropes and measure."

The Kotzker *zt'l* explains that they were asking him, "The Beis HaMikdash used to be in the middle of the world. Where is the Beis HaMikdash today?" With this question, they were teasing Reb Yehoshua ben Chananya, implying to him that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, and that Hashem turned away from the Jewish nation.

Reb Yehoshua told them, "The Beis HaMikdash is here, in every Yid."

It states (25:8) ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם "They shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst."

It doesn't state ושכנתי בתוכם, "I will dwell in it." It says ושכנתי בתוכם, "I will dwell in their midst." The sefarim explain this to mean that Hashem dwells within every Yid. There is an *aron* in every Yid. This is his heart. There are *keruvim* in every Yid. They are his eyes. And all the limbs of a human being correspond to the utensils of the mishkan. Just as Hashem dwelt in the Mishkan, Hashem dwells within every Yid.

It states (Yeshayah 33:15-16) הלך צדקות ודבר מישרים מאם בבצע מעשקות נער כפיו מתמך בשחד אטם אזנו משמע דמים ועצם עיניו מראות ברע, הוא מרומים ישכן מצדות סלעים משגבו לחמו נתן מימיו נאמנים "He who walks righteously and speaks honestly, who scorns oppression, who shakes his hands from taking hold of bribe, closes his ear from hearing of blood, and closes his eyes from seeing evil. He shall dwell on high; rocky fortresses shall be his defense; his bread shall be given [to him], his water sure."

The Metzudas Dovid explains, "If he does all of the above, he will dwell in a safe place, as if he is in a high place and the enemy can't get there."

The Targum Yonason translates it as הוא באתר רם ומגול יהי בית משרוהי בית מקדש "He will dwell in a high place, in the Beis HaMikdash." He is explaining that his own home becomes a Beis HaMikdash.

The Divrei Yisrael zt'l said that the Gan Eden of Bnei Yisrael is in Olam HaBa, and the Gan Eden of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is to be in a Yid, as it states (Vayikra 26:12) והלכתי בתוכם, "I will walk within you."

The Midrash tells us that Hashem wants to dwell among us. He doesn't want to be distant from us. The Midrash explains that this is because Hashem loves the Torah, and He wants to be near where there is Torah. Hashem gave us the Torah, so He wants to be near us.

The Midrash states, "Is there a sale that when you buy an item, the seller comes along with it? But Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells Yisrael, 'I sold the Torah to you, keviyachol, I am sold together with it, as it states ויקחו לי, 'Take Me.' It can be compared to a king who had an only daughter. Another king came and married the only daughter. This king wanted to return to his land and take his wife with him. His father-in-law told him, 'This is my only daughter. I can't be distant from her. But I also can't tell you that you can't take her with you because she is your wife. Do me this favor. Wherever you go, make a small room for me so I can dwell there with you because I can't be without my daughter.' Similarly, Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells Yisrael, 'I gave you the Torah. I can't leave it. I can't tell you not to take it. Rather, wherever you go, make me a room so I can be there. This is the meaning of the words (25:8) ושכנתי בתוכם, 'I will dwell in your midst.'"

The Beis Aharon zt'l would tell his chasidim to learn this Midrash every year. Wherever we are, and with everything we do, make a place for Hashem to be there, too.

Kedushah

How does one create a place for the Shechinah? Shach al HaTorah zt'l writes that the answer is found in the word מקדש. The pasuk doesn't state ועשו לי משכן; it states ועשו לי מקדש, a sanctuary. This implies that when one sanctifies himself, Hashem resides with him.

A photographer was offered a well-paying job to take pictures at a major event. He realized that he would have to compromise on some of his gedarim, boundaries, related to guarding his eyes, so he turned down the offer.

A few days afterward, he was at an event. Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l was there, and from a distance, Reb Chaim motioned for him to come forward. The photographer looked around, trying to understand who Reb Chaim was calling because he couldn't

imagine it was him. Reb Chaim motioned again to him, implying, "I mean you."

He approached the front table, and Reb Chaim told him, "I am jealous of you."

The photographer asked, "Why? What did I do?"

Reb Chaim replied, "They don't know. I know."

The photographer understood that it was because he passed the test and turned down the lucrative offer to guard his eyes. He thought to himself, "If Reb Chaim knows, heaven certainly knows." His good deed wouldn't be forgotten.⁵ This is an example of turning oneself into a Mishkan, a sanctuary for Hashem.

Reb Nisan Gaon tells the story of the holy baal teshuvah who became the tana Nosson Tzutzisa:

Reb Akiva once rode on a donkey with his talmidim and asked, "Who is riding there, in the distance, on a donkey? I see a light on the head."

The students told Reb Akiva, "He is Nosson the baal aveirah, and we don't see anything on his head."

Reb Akiva asked his talmidim to call him over. When he arrived, Reb Akiva told him, "I see a light on your head. How did you merit this?"

Nosson told him that he had encountered a difficult test, and he overcame his temptations and conquered the yetzer hara.

Reb Akiva told him this was why a halo of light shone above his head. Reb Akiva said, "This is your portion in this world, and you will merit Olam HaBa."

Nosson studied by Reb Akiva and became the tana Nosson Tzutzitza.

We don't have an inkling of the greatness of a tana, but we can understand from this story that when one passes a test related to yiras shomayim, he reaches very high levels.

About creating the paroches, it states (26:31) *מעשה חשב יעשה אתה ררבים*, "The work of a master weaver he shall make it, in a woven cherubim design." The Chasam Sofer zt'l explains that a person that is cautious with his thoughts, *מעשה חושב*, becomes like the keruvim, like the malachim in heaven.

Be Happy with Your Portion

Another way to turn yourself into a Mishkan or a Beis HaMikdash is to be satisfied with your lot.

The Ksav Sofer (Shu't Orach Chaim 27) writes, "Chazal say, *אין השכינה שורה אלא מתוך שמחה*, 'The Shechinah resides only amid joy.' What is the reason for this? Hashem isn't a human being who doesn't want to be among people who have sour faces or broken spirits. On the contrary, it is written *ישכון את דכא*, that Hashem dwells with the downtrodden. Rather, the Shechinah doesn't reside with those who are sad because their sadness demonstrates that their emunah is incomplete. They don't believe that everything is from Hashem and for the good. Had they believed this, they wouldn't have been upset or confused when they encountered times that appeared to human eyes as bad times. The Shechinah only resides where there is joy, upon people who believe that everything is for the good, even when they don't know how and why."

A person must be *שמח בחלקו*, happy with his portion. The brother of the Maharal zt'l said that *חם לך קר ויבש* is *roshei teivos* for *חם*, hot, wet, cold, dry. One should be happy with whatever Hashem sends his way.

5. When Reb Chaim said he was jealous of him, it wasn't an exaggeration to make this person feel good. He was jealous because Reb Chaim didn't have such tests, and the reward is according to the test and hardship involved.

The Zohar says that everything in the Mishkan can be found in a human being. One of the items used to build the Mishkan was the hides of a תחש animal. Where is tachash in a human being? The Divrei Yisrael zt'l answers that it is his attitude to be happy with every situation that comes his way.

He explains:

Rashi (25:5) writes, "The tachash is a type of animal that, לא היתה אלא לשעה, was only existent at that time. It had many colors. Therefore, Unkelos translates it as ססגונה, which means ששש ומתפאר בגווניו שלו, "It rejoices and is proud of its colors."

The Divrei Yisrael zt'l says that the different colors of the tachash represent the various experiences – the good and the difficult – that people go through in life. The tachash rejoiced with all its colors, characterizing people who accept all life experiences with joy. Rashi writes, ולא היתה אלא לשעה, hinting at a person that accepts the שעה, the time and experience that Hashem gives him. He isn't impatient and doesn't try to force the situation to change. He accepts what Hashem gives him with joy.⁶

It states (23:25) והסירתי מחלה מקרבך, "I will remove illness from your midst." Which illness is מקרבך, in your midst? The Ksav Sofer explains that refers to the illness of being unhappy with one's portion.

Chanah didn't have children and she was despondent. Her husband Elkanah told her (Shmuel 1, 1:8) חנה למה תבכי ולמה לא תאכלי ולמה ירע "Chanah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

Elkanah's taught her that there was no reason for her to sulk. He told her: אנכי טוב לך. The message was (1) everything is planned

by אנכי, the one, Hashem. (2) טוב, everything is for your good. (3) לך, everything is perfectly planned for what you need. The final words מעשרה בנים means that this thought should give you more joy than if you had ten children.

People think their lives would be better if they had a million dollars. But having a lot of good doesn't always mean life is better. It can be compared to pouring too much water on plants. Water is good; it brings life, and plants grow from water, but the seeds rot if you pour too much water.

Another mashal is fire. Fire is good. It warms the home and cooks food, but too much fire isn't what anyone wants.

So, we see that too much good isn't always good for us.

Of course, you need money to cover bills and marry off children, but sleep with peace, and don't do extra – unnecessary – hishtadlus.

Reb Aharon Gardiya zt'l was a baal teshuvah, a doctor, and a chasid of the Magid of Mezritzh zt'l. One Shabbos morning, Reb Aharon told the Magid that he saw on the face of one of the chassidim that he would die shortly time. But later that evening, that person arrived to beis medresh. The Magid asked Reb Aharon, "Didn't you say he would die?"

Reb Aharon replied, "When I said that he looked ill like he would die, it was correct. At that time, he had a short time to live. However, he ate something sharp, which burned away the illness."

People went to this chasid and asked him what he ate this Shabbos. He said he was very poor and barely had any food at home. That morning, he was starving. He had to eat something; all he had was very sharp

6. Rebbe Reb Bunim zt'l said that if everyone would place their bundle of troubles on a table and then be allowed to choose any bundle they wanted, everyone would take back their own bundle. Hashem gives each person precisely the challenges that are best for him and the tools to deal with those challenges.

food. "I ate a lot of it because I was hungry and didn't have anything else."

This saved his life. He could have complained that Shabbos morning. "Why can everyone feast on delicious foods on Shabbos, while I must satisfy my hunger with food that burns my mouth and stomach!" But he had nothing to complain about because this problem saved his life.

This is an example of how everything is good, even when we don't immediately realize it.

A person told Reb Moshe Klirs zt'l, the rav of Teveria, about his many difficulties in life. Reb Moshe told him, "Why are you telling me only half of the story?"

The man didn't understand. "What is the other half of the story?"

"You are in the middle of the story. Wait a bit, and you will see how everything turns out well."

It states (Shemos 15:2) ויהי לי לישועה. The word ויהי expresses tzaar, distress (see Megillah 10:). ויהי, the tzaar I had, לי לישועה, became my salvation.

Beis Medresh with a Minyan

Chazal call a beis medresh a בית מקדש מעט, a miniature Beis HaMikdash. That is our Beis HaMikdash in galus.

There are significant advantages to daven in a Beis Medresh; one is that it is where we have a minyan.

Ramban (end of parashas Bo) writes, "The purpose of a minyan (תפלת הרבים) is that people should have a place where they gather to praise Hashem Who created them and proclaim before Him, 'We are your creations.'"

The Gemara (Brachos 7:-8.) brings several sources that one should daven with a minyan. One is from the pasuk (Tehillim 69:14), ואני תפילתי לך ה' עת רצון "I pray to you at a desired time." We see that the ideal to daven is at an

עת רצון, a desired time. The Gemara adds that this is when the tzibur is davening."

Another source, stated in the Gemara, is (Iyov 36) הן א"ל כביר ולא ימאס "Hashem is never disgusted from a tefillah of the community."

Yet another source from the Gemara is the pasuk (Tehillim 55) פדה בשלום נפשי... כי ברבים היו "Hashem saved me...because I prayed with a minyan."

It states (Tehillim 102:18), פנה אל תפילת הערער, "Turn to the tefillah of the Arar. Reb Chaim Volozhiner zt'l (Ruach Chaim, Avos) explains that תפילת הערער means "alone." פנה אל תפילת הערער means that when one davens alone, without a minyan, פנה, Hashem turns to look at this person and his prayer, to analyze his deeds and determine whether he deserves to be answered. The pasuk concludes, ולא בזה את, תפילתם, "He doesn't despise their prayer." This half of the pasuk discusses when one davens with a minyan. This is the reason תפילתם is in the plural. לא בזה את תפילתם, Hashem will not despise their tefillah.

Reb Chaim Volozhiner writes that when the Mishnah (Avos 2:13) says הוי זהיר בקריאת שמע... ובתפילה... "Be cautious with saying Shema and tefillah," it means to be cautious to daven with a minyan. The Mishnah explains, ואל תהי רשע בשע בפני עצמך, which can be translated as, "Don't be a rasha, by davening alone." When you daven alone, Heaven will judge you, and you are at risk of being deemed a rasha. It is better to avoid this scrutiny and to daven with a minyan.

Chofetz Chaim (Nidchei Yisrael 5) writes:

"The importance of tefillah is stated in Chazal (Brachos 32), "Tefillah is greater than good deeds. There is no one greater than Moshe Rabbeinu with good deeds; nevertheless, he was only answered [to see Eretz Yisrael] due to his tefillos... Tefillah is greater than korbanos... Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, 'All I ask from you is words... Cry and pray before Me. Didn't I redeem your forefathers [from Mitzrayim] when they prayed to Me? ... And in the times of Yehoshua, didn't I perform miracles for you

due to your tefillos? So, you see that I don't ask you to bring korbanos. All I ask is that you daven to Me... Even if a person doesn't deserve to be saved, when he davens a lot before Me, I will bestow My kindness upon him. Hakadosh Baruch Hu instructs us to be cautious with tefillah because nothing is greater than it. Therefore, everyone should be careful not to lose even one tefillah, chas v'shalom... Even when he is among goyim and the ways of Judaism are strange and a joke in their eyes, nevertheless, he must be sure not to lose a tefillah. He should find a place on the road where he can daven. And if he can't have kavanah on the road, he should daven indoors. It is better to suffer shame and humiliation than to lose out on a tefillah. We find in Daniel that King Daryavash decreed that all requests must be directed to him, and he forbade to daven to Hashem. Whoever transgressed his decree would be thrown into the lion's den. Even so, Daniel hid in his attic and continued to daven three times each day. We certainly shouldn't allow a drop of shame and humiliation to prevent us from davening... We will now discuss the importance of tefillah b'tzibbur.

"There is a great benefit to daven with a minyan because the tefillah is more likely to be accepted. Even if it isn't the best tefillah, nevertheless, since many are saying it, the merit of the group is great and the tefillah

won't be rejected. Therefore, in our times, when there is so much on people's minds, and who can say that he davens perfectly, one should be cautious to daven with a minyan so his tefillah is not discarded.

"When there is kriyas haTorah, such as on Monday and Thursday, one must certainly daven with a minyan, so he can hear the kriyas haTorah, which is a takanah of Moshe Rabbeinu, as the Gemara (Bava Kama ch.2) teaches. The Gemara Megillah says that even those who lived in villages would come to the cities on Mondays and Thursdays so they could hear kriyas haTorah. So, someone living in the city is certainly obligated to daven with a minyan and hear kriyas haTorah."⁷

A Minyan is Greater than the Tefillos of the Biggest Tzaddik of the Generation

The Beis Aharon writes, "I have received the following rule: When one prays with a minyan, the *Shechinah* is there, and it accomplishes and corrects all matters, just as it is when the greatest tzaddik of the generation davens."

We see the power of a minyan in halachah. A great tzaddik cannot say kedushah when he is alone. Even if the nine greatest tzaddikim of our nation daven together, they still cannot say kaddish or chazaras hashatz. Yet, a minyan of simple people can

7. The Beis Aharon zt'l of Karlin had to undergo a surgical procedure. He requested that the operation be scheduled for early afternoon so he could daven minchah before the operation and then daven maariv at night. Ten people waited to daven maariv with the rebbe; however, when it became late and the rebbe wasn't yet ready to daven, the minyan davened on their own and left.

When the Beis Aharon was ready to daven, he asked the gabbai if there was a minyan. The gabbai replied, "Definitely, there is a minyan. We will daven outside the rebbe's room, and the rebbe can daven from his room."

The gabbai said kaddish and barchu out loud and pretended that there was a minyan, although no one was there.

Some days afterwards, the gabbai apologized to the rebbe. "There really wasn't a minyan. I am afraid I sinned because I said kaddish and barchu without a minyan."

The Rebbe told him that after the surgery, he was frail. Had he known there was no minyan, he wouldn't have been able to endure the tzaar. "You acted correctly, because for pikuach nefesh, it is permitted."

say kedushah and kaddish, etc. This proves the uniqueness of a minyan, which even the greatest tzaddikim cannot compare to.

The Yaaras Dvash (vol.2 drush 9) teaches that Esther told Mordechai that he needed to daven with a minyan to bring salvations. It states (Esther 2:5) איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה ושמם מרדכי, "There was a Jewish man in Shushan HaBirah (Shushan the capital) whose name was Mordechai..." The Yaaras Dvash explains that איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה means that Mordechai was the only Yid living there. This is because there were two parts of Shushan: Shushan and Shushan HaBirah. Achashverosh and the high-ranking officials lived in Shushan HaBirah, while most Yidden lived in Shushan. Mordechai, a high-ranking official also lived in Shushan HaBirah, and was the only Yid living there. Esther told him (Esther 4:16) לך כנוס את כל היהודים, "Go, assemble all the Yidden that are found in Shushan...." to pray for Esther when she approaches Achashverosh to plead for their lives. The Yaaras Dvash explains that Esther told Mordechai his prayers in Shushan HaBirah were insufficient. He must gather all the Yidden and daven together.

Reb Yishmael Kohen Gadol said (Brachos 7.), "Once I came into the Kodesh Kadashim to offer the ketores [on Yom Kippur], and I saw Hashem...sitting on His exalted throne. He said to me, 'Yishmael, my son, bless Me.' I told him, יהי רצון מלפניך, 'May it be your will that Your compassion should overcome Your anger... and You should act with Your children with compassion and treat them beyond the letter of the law,' and He nodded to me with His head."

The Gemara concludes, "This teaches us, אל תהי ברכת הדיוט קלה בעיניך, "The brachos of a simple person should be a light matter in your eyes."

Why does the Gemara call Reb Yishmael Kohen Gadol a simple person? He was from the holiest people of his generation!⁸

The Maharasha (סוד"ה אכתריא"ל) explains that it was a simple brachah, a ברכות הדיוט, because it was said without a minyan.⁹ So, we see that the brachah of the holiest person in the world can be considered a birchas hedyot, a simple blessing, when it is given without a minyan!

Yet another indication of the importance of tefillah with a minyan is that Rav Yitzchak taught Rav Nachman the importance of davening with a minyan. So, we see that even the greatest people of the generation benefit from tefillah b'tzibbur. It is the most exalted form of tefillah.

Love and Fear Creates a Mishkan

It states (Shir Hashirim 3:9-10), אפריון עשה לו המלך, שלמה מעצי הלבנון... תוכו רצון אהבה מבנות ירושלים, "King Shlomo made himself a Mikdash from the trees of Lebanon... its interior inlaid with love from the daughters of Yerushalayim." The *pasuk* is asking and wondering how it could be built מעצי הלבנון, from Lebanese trees. How could a physical structure host Hashem?

The *pasuk* replies, תוכו רצון אהבה מבנות ירושלים. The Bnos Yerushalayim represent the Jewish nation. The *pasuk* clarifies that the Jewish nation donated the items with love, and therefore Hashem wanted to be there.

8. The simple answer to this question is that compared to Hashem, we can certainly consider Yishmael Kohen Gadol's blessing to be the brachah of a simple person. And since Hashem desired to receive his blessings, we understand that we should also seek and appreciate the brachos of all people, even simple people.

9. We quote the Maharsha: ועל שם שהיה יחיד קרא לה ברכת הדיוט דאף על פי כן היה תפלתו מרוצה ומקובלת לפניו ית' ב"ה, "Since he davened by himself, it is called a birkas hedyot, a simple brachah. Nevertheless [although he was without a minyan], his tefillah was desired and accepted before Hashem yisbarach.

Arvei Nachal writes, "It is known that when one makes himself holy with these attributes (love, fear, and desire to serve Hashem), the Shechinah comes to him. Hashem loves these emotions, and wherever these emotions are found, Hashem goes there. Therefore, Hashem commanded that every Yid should donate to the Mishkan. Each Yid donated with as much love as he could muster, and the Mishkan was built from these donations. The Mishkan contained the kedushah of the entire nation, which drew down Hashem's Shechinah in the most fitting manner."

We don't have the perfection of the Mishkan/Beis HaMikdash in our times because the Beis HaMikdash is built through the love of the entire nation. Nevertheless, when a Yid loves and fears and yearns for Hashem, he has made Hashem a place in this world.

When Shlomo Hamelech built the Beis HaMikdash, he davened (Malachim 1, 8:57) יהי ה' אלקינו עמנו כאשר היה עם אבותינו אל יעזבנו ואל יטשנו, "May Hashem be with us, as He was with our forefathers; let Him not leave us, nor forsake us."

This seems like a very unusual request. Now that there is a Beis HaMikdash, Hashem will certainly be with them, even more than before!

The Akeidah (quoted in Chasam Sofer, Terumah, haftarah) answers that in the past, Hashem dwelled in the souls of the Jewish nation. Shlomo HaMelech feared that now that the Beis HaMikdash was built and Hashem lived in this house, perhaps Hashem would no longer reside on the good Yidden who made a place in their heart for Hashem. Therefore, he davened that this aspect of Hashem's presence should always remain with us.

Creating a Mishkan in Your Individual Way

Reb Moshe Feinstein zt'l (Darash Moshe) clarifies that there is a fundamental difference between Hashem's dwelling place in the

desert, in the Mishkan, to Hashem's dwelling place in our times, which is in the neshamah of a Yid and the Yiddishe home.

He explains that the Mishkan has set laws, exactly how it should appear. However, when one turns his neshamah into a sanctuary for Hashem, and likewise, when one turns his home into a Mishkan for Hashem to dwell there, there are no set, rigid laws. Each person serves Hashem somewhat differently, and each person, in his individual way, creates a place for Hashem.

This brings us to the important discussion of serving Hashem according to your abilities. One shouldn't copy others. Instead, he should recognize the strengths, talents, and skills that Hashem gave him and use them for avodas Hashem.

The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Mishlei*, תתקל"ב) expresses the importance of serving Hashem according to the talent Hashem gave you:

"Reb Elazar Hakapar's nephew, Chiya, had a beautiful voice. Reb Elazar Hakapar would tell him, 'Chiya, honor Hashem with the talent Hashem gave you. Navos had a beautiful voice, and when he went to Yerushalayim for the *yomim tovim*, everyone would gather around him to listen to him sing. One year, he didn't go to Yerushalayim, and dishonest people testified falsely against him, and he was killed (see *Melachim* 1, ch.21). Why did this happen to him? It's because he didn't honor Hashem with the talent Hashem granted him.'"

Reb Meir Shapiro was a chassid of Rebbe Yisrael of Chortkov zt'l. One Shabbos, when Reb Meir Shapiro was in Chortkov, the Rebbe asked him to daven before the *amud* (*Rosh Chodesh benching* and *Musaf*). After the *tefillah*, the Rebbe invited Reb Meir Shapiro to eat the Shabbos *seudah* with him.

When the meal was over and Reb Meir Shapiro left the Rebbe's home, people saw Reb Meir beaming joyfully. They asked him what had happened at the meal that made him so happy.

He told them the Rebbe praised him for the tefillos he had *davened* before the *amud*. The Rebbe was saying, "Ah! Reb Meir! Your tefillah! Your *Rosh Chodesh* *benching*! The *musaf*! It was so beautiful."

Reb Meir Shapiro said to the Rebbe, "If the Rebbe enjoys my tefillah so much, perhaps I should leave Sanik, where I'm the Rav, and I should become the *chazan* here?"

The Chortkover Rebbe explained to Reb Meir Shapiro that everyone has his primary life mission. "You are a *talmid chacham*, a talented teacher, and you have all the talents to be a *Rosh Yeshiva*. Therefore, that is your life's mission."

Soon afterward, Reb Meir Shapiro opened the Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, where he channeled all his abilities to teach Torah to Yidden. He understood that this was his life's calling and invested all his energies into succeeding in his personal mission.

Once, Reb Meir Shapiro was asked to represent the Jewish community in the Polish parliament. Reb Meir Shapiro asked Rebbe Yisrael of Tchortkov *zt'l* whether he should accept this position.

The Rebbe replied in a letter, "I received your letter, and I will tell you my opinion:

"A person can determine his life's assignment and the service that Hashem wants from him based on the talents Hashem endowed him with. Hashem granted you a sharp mind, the acuity to delve into Torah and draw out beautiful diamonds and teach students. You have already established many outstanding students. If you accept this government position, it will take away from your *avodas hakodesh*. On the other hand, in this political role, you will be able to do a lot of good for the community. Therefore, my advice is: Don't do any *hishtadlus* towards attaining this governmental position. But if the Agudah committee asks you to take on the position, accept it."

Everyone must serve Hashem in his own way, according to the talent and nature Hashem gave him. If you try to do what others do, you will fail and never accomplish your mission.

Reb Mendel Futerfas *zt'l* spoke about a time when he was imprisoned in Siberia. The warden forbade the prisoners to play cards. (There was no reason for this rule other than to break the spirit of the prisoners.) Nevertheless, some prisoners smuggled in a deck of cards and played in their barracks.

Once, the guards heard that there were cards in prison, so they came barging into the barracks and searched all over for the cards but couldn't find anything.

This is what happened: One of the prisoners was an expert at pickpocketing (which was probably why he was imprisoned). He knew how to take a wallet out of a person's pocket without the person feeling anything. This time, instead of picking a pocket, he used his talents to place the deck of cards into the pocket of one of the guards searching the barracks.

The guard looked for the deck of cards under the beds, inside the drawers, and in everyone's pockets without realizing it was in his own pocket. On his way out, the pickpocket slid the cards back out of the guard's pocket.

The *nimshal* is that people think the treasure is elsewhere. They want to copy others because they believe others know how to serve Hashem better. But this isn't necessarily true. Each person has his treasure in his pocket. All he must do is to discover it and master it.

Reb Chaim Brim *zt'l* once asked the renowned *baal teshuvah*, Reb Uri Zohar *z'l*, "Who influenced you to do *teshuvah*?"

Reb Uri Zohar replied, "What difference does it make?"

Reb Chaim Brim replied, "I'm asking because I also want to do *teshuvah*. Tell me

who helped you do *teshuvah*, and I will go to him. Perhaps he can influence me to do *teshuvah*, as he influenced you."

Reb Uri Zohar replied that he was influenced by Reb Yitzchak Shlomo Zilberman *zt'l*.

Reb Chaim Brim went to Reb Zilberman and requested that he inspire him to do *teshuvah*.

Reb Zilberman replied, "I'm sorry. I cannot help you. When I meet someone far from Torah and mitzvos, I can easily show him that he is on the wrong path and must change his ways. But you daven and learn Torah. You think you are doing everything correctly, so how can I show you where to improve?"

One of the reasons people think they are doing everything correctly is because they copy what they see others do. They say, "I am doing everything others are doing; what could be wrong?" But the problem is that Hashem gave each person an individual mission. We must identify it and use all our talents and abilities for Hashem's service. And as we wrote above, when we do so, we have created a Mishkan for Hashem in this world, in the neshamah of a Yid.

Investing in Avodas Hashem

The Divrei Yechezkel (Shinov) *zt'l* writes that by watching how people are involved in their *parnassah* with all their heart and soul, you can learn how to be devoted to *avodas Hashem*. This is the meaning of the words ויקחו לי תרומה. The Torah urges every Yid to elevate himself and become more spiritual. (תרומה means to elevate oneself.) But how can one do so? How can one train himself to be devoted to *avodas Hashem*? The answer is מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו, copy the people who vigorously pursue their *parnassah*. They work so hard, by day and by night. You should do the same in your *avodas Hashem*. They work to succeed in this temporary world, so you should certainly work as hard to do *avodas Hashem*, whose reward is eternal.

The Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe, Ki Seitzei, ד"ה או יאמר) writes this lesson on the words מאויבי תחכמני מצותיך כי לעולם היא לי (Tehillim 119:98). The Chasam Sofer writes, "The mitzvos are לעולם, forever... So, if for a tiny pleasure – nothing more than a fleeting moment and then it is gone – a person works so hard, certainly one should toil to earn a mitzvah, for that is eternal."