

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Beha'aloscha



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Torah Wellsprings - Beha'aloscha

Parnassah

In the desert, the Yidden didn't travel or camp where and when they wanted. With the ענני כבוד, clouds of glory, Hashem showed them when to travel and where to camp, as it states (9:18-20) כל פי ה' יסעו ועל פי ה' יחנו "At the bidding of Hashem, Bnei Yisrael traveled, and at the bidding of Hashem, they encamped."

The Shlah Hakodesh teaches that this continues to occur to this day. Therefore, although we don't have the ענני כבוד guiding us, where and when we go is still in Hashem's hands.

This applies to everything we do, such as the shidduchim we choose, the parnassah we work in, and millions of other details. We are in Hashem's hands. על פי פי ה', according to Hashem's will, that is what we do, and that is what occurs.

(Obviously, there is the concept of free will, and it needs studying to understand how it relates to the idea of על פי ה'. But right now, we are focusing on the aspect of Hashem's hashgachah pratis that plays a primary role in everything that happens to us and everything we do in life.)

The Shlah Hakadosh (Derech Chaim Tochachas Mussar 12) writes, "This teaches us a lesson in mussar: With everything that a person does, he should say *im yirtzeh Hashem* or *b'ezras Hashem* [because he won't be able to do it without Hashem's will and aid]. For example, when traveling, he should say, 'I am traveling *b'ezras Hashem yisborach*, and I plan to stop at place ploni *b'ezras Hashem, im yirtzeh Hashem.*' When he gets to that place, he should praise Hashem and say, '*B'ezras Hashem yisborach*, I came here, and I plan to travel on day ploni, *b'ezras Hashem, im yirtzeh Hashem.*' When one does so, Hashem's name will always be on his lips."¹

1. Year 5685, the Chofetz Chaim informed his community in Radin that he was going to go to Eretz Yisrael. When he finished the drashah, one of the baalabatim came over and asked, "Why didn't you say '*im yirtzeh Hashem*'?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One day, he was going to the marketplace to buy oxen and met Eliyahu Hanavi, dressed like a merchant. [Apparently, although his emunah was lacking, he had merits because of his tzedakah, and Eliyahu HaNavi was sent to teach him about emunah.]

The Shlah Hakadosh's lesson applies to all aspects of life. One will only succeed with Hashem's will and aid.

Parnassah is a prime example. Success in parnassah is solely b'ezras Hashem and im yirtzeh Hashem. Hashem gives the ideas, the opportunities, the successes, and even the losses and failures. Everything is destined.

Reb Avraham ben HaRambam writes: When a person thinks he earns parnassah on

his own, it is a *kefirah musteres*, a concealed heresy, because we must believe that parnassah comes from Hashem.

The Gemara (Brachos 8) teaches, "The one who enjoys the work of his hands is greater than a yirei Shamayim." How should we understand this Gemara? Could someone who works for a living be greater than a yirei Shamayim?

Rebbe Yechezkel of Kuzmir zy"l explains that the Gemara refers to a person who

Eliyahu asked, "Where are you going?"

"To buy oxen."

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

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

The wealthy man continued without realizing that he dropped his wallet. Eliyahu picked up the wallet filled with money and put it on a stone in the middle of the forest.

It took the merchant quite some time before he found the oxen he wanted to buy. Then, when he was ready to pay, he discovered that he had lost his money. He returned home, disappointed.

Sometime later, he took money and set off to the marketplace. Once again, he met up with Eliyahu HaNavi; this time, Eliyahu appeared like an elderly person. Eliyahu asked him, "Where are you going?" The wealthy man said that he was going to buy oxen. Eliyahu HaNavi told him, "You won't succeed in buying oxen if it isn't Hashem's will. Say *im yirtzeh Hashem!*" but the man refused.

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

The man awoke, and when he saw the money was gone, he came home distressed again. At home, he thought over what had occurred and realized he was being punished because he didn't say *im yirtzeh Hashem*. He realized that he couldn't do anything without Hashem's help. So he made a kabbalah that, from now on, he would say *im yirtzeh Hashem*.

He set off to the market to buy oxen a third time. Before he reached the market, he met Eliyahu HaNavi, who, this time appeared to him like a young lad seeking work. He chatted with the wealthy merchant, and when the lad heard that he was going to buy oxen, he offered, "If you need help to lead the oxen, you can hire me."

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

The wealthy merchant found very good oxen at an excellent price. He hired the lad to help him bring the oxen back to his home. As they walked, the oxen suddenly ran into the forest, and the merchant chased them. Finally, the oxen stopped beside a stone - beside the two missing money pouches. The merchant was overjoyed and praised Hashem. When the merchant and the lad arrived at his home, the lad suddenly disappeared. That is when the merchant understood that this was Eliyahu HaNavi and that Hashem's hashgachah was involved in everything that occurred.

works for a living and believes that his parnassah comes from Hashem. This is a very high level of emunah (because it is so easy to think that his parnassah comes from his work), and he is therefore considered even greater than someone who is a yirei Shamayim.²

When one knows that his parnassah comes from Hashem, he will have more success.³ Another benefit is that when you realize Hashem gives you parnassah, you know that you can work less, and Hashem will still support you. You can devote time to Torah and avodas Hashem, and you won't lose your parnassah because of that.

This week's parashah discusses the *mann*, which was collected every weekday. It states (11:8) שטו העם ולקטו וטחנו ברחיים או דכו במדוכה ובשלו "The people walked about and gathered it. Then they ground it in a mill or crushed it in a mortar, and cooked it in a pot... It had a taste like the taste of oil cake." The Zohar (vol.2 pp.62-63) writes, שטו means they acted with *shtus*, foolishness, because they didn't have emunah." The Zohar explains that it was foolish to work so hard to collect and to prepare the *mann*. If they had trusted in Hashem, they would have received their *mann* at their doorstep, and they wouldn't need to prepare it.

The Zohar says that the *mann* passed through Gan Eden to come down to this world; therefore, it had a scent of Gan Eden. However, those who toiled very hard to prepare the *mann* didn't experience this scent of Gan Eden. For them, the *mann* tasted like לשד השמן, a cake.

So, in the desert, there were several differences between those who believed in Hashem to give them parnassah and those who didn't. The believers worked less and enjoyed their parnassah more, and this phenomenon continues until today. When one believes in Hashem, his attempt at parnassah is with much less strife and anxiety, he has time for Torah and tefillah, and he enjoys his parnassah immensely. He feels the scent of Gan Eden in his work and his life. Whereas, when one thinks that his parnassah is dependent on him, he works very hard, is very worried, doesn't have time for Torah and tefillah, and doesn't enjoy his parnassah, either.

The parashah begins with the topic of lighting the menorah, בהעלתך את הנרות, "When you kindle the lamps..." The Gemara (Shabbos 22:) tells us that all seven lamps of the menorah were filled with the same amount of oil, yet one lamp, the נר מערבי, remained lit for several more hours than all the others lamps, and this occurred every day!

2. Reb Kopel Chosid zy"a (a student of the Baal Shem Tov) was called by his fellow merchants "Reb Kopel Shevisi'nig" because he repeatedly said (Tehillim 16:8) שוייתי ה' לנגדי תמיד, "I have placed Hashem before me constantly."

He owned the most accurate scale in the market, and all the Jewish, G-d fearing merchants used his scale to sell their merchandise according to halachah.

When Reb Kopel didn't come to the market, the merchants would say, "When *Shevisi* isn't here, we can't do business." Their intention was twofold: (1) *Reb Kopel Shevisi'nig* is absent, and we don't have accurate scales, so we can't do business. (2) Without שוייתי, without placing Hashem before our eyes, we can't do business because one must always remember that success in business is only with Hashem's help.

3. In the story of Eliyahu HaNavi, which we wrote above (note #1), initially, the wealthy merchant thought he was buying oxen on his own. At that time, he had to toil hard to find the oxen he wanted and to make a deal. But when he believed in Hashem's hashgachah pratis, he found the best oxen for an excellent price. His business dealings became easier and more successful. This is because when we trust in Hashem, we merit Hashem's aid and hashgachah pratis.

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 15:6) connects יראו (Tehillim 34:10) to the pasuk (Tehillim 34:10) בהעלתך את הנרות "Fear Hashem, His holy ones; for there is no lack to those who fear Him." The Tiferes Shmuel zt'l explains that the connection between these pasukim is that they both tell us that one can work less, and Hashem will support him. Just as the נר מערבי burned longer than all other lamps, so can one work less, and Hashem will support him equal to those who work more hours.

It states (Avos 3:16) מצודה פרוסה על כל החיים "A trap is set before all mankind."⁴

The Baal Shem Tov zt'l (quoted in Bas Ayin, Bamidbar פר"ה וידבר) says that פרוסה refers to bread or parnassah (as in בדי אכילת פרס). מצודה פרוסה means the pursuit of parnassah is a trap, על כל החיים, and everyone is at risk of falling into this trap. Pursuing parnassah is a trap because there is a misconception that one must work many hours to earn a living, leaving no time for Torah, tefillah, and mitzvos.

The Bas Ayin writes, "There is a trap before all mankind, and that is the pursuit to earn a living, and this trap captures people. A person has plans and strategies for earning parnassah, and he thinks he earns parnassah through the strength of his hand. He doesn't trust that Hashem will certainly give him his parnassah, as Chazal (Taanis 8:) say, 'The One Who gives life will give parnassah.'"

The Gemara (Brachos 4:) states, "Whoever says Ashrei three times a day, he is guaranteed that he will be a ben Olam HaBa."

The Gemara asks, "Why is that? Is it because the Ashrei is written according to the order of the alef beis? If so, we can say chapter (Tehillim 119), which has eight times each letter. And if it is because it has the

פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ וּמַשְׁבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רִצּוֹן, 'You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing [with] its desire,' we can say (Tehillim 136) for it states there, נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכֹל בֶּשֶׂר, 'He gives nourishment to all flesh.'

"Rather, it is because both these aspects in the Ashrei."

The Ashrei is built on the alef beis, and it also has the pasuk of parnassah, פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ וּמַשְׁבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רִצּוֹן. This is what makes Ashrei so unique, and when one says it three times a day, he is a Ben Olam HaBa.

The Pnei Yehoshua (Brachos 4:) explains that Ashrei teaches us that we can work less and still have sufficient parnassah. One will merit Olam HaBa because he won't be wasting his life solely working. He will have time for Torah and tefillah. The Ashrei teaches us this lesson because it is built on the alef beis, and this tells us that the world was created for those who study Torah, which was given in the twenty-two letters of the alef beis. Everything in the world, all creations, were created for the people who study Torah. We say in Ashrei, פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ וּמַשְׁבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רִצּוֹן, that Hashem gives life to all creations. From the smallest bug to the largest animals, all receive their sustenance easily, from Hashem. Now, if all creatures are sustained with such ease, and they were created to serve mankind, then man can certainly receive his parnassah in an easy manner, leaving him with time for Torah and tefillah.

The Pnei Yehoshua writes, "This chapter has the pasuk פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ וּמַשְׁבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רִצּוֹן, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu sustains all, from the largest animals to the smallest... They all have parnassah without working hard and without distress, as stated in the pasuk before it in this chapter, עֵינֵי כָל אֱלִיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ וְאַתָּה, 'Everyone's eyes look to You with hope, and You give them their food in its time.' One will understand and

4. According to Ra'v Bartanura, this means that death and punishment are the lot and fate set before all mankind, and no one can escape it.

say, 'Why should I work all day long to earn my parnassah? There is no need. The entire world, which was created [to help the person who studies Torah] receive their parnassah without toil, certainly this will be the portion of those who study Torah, for they are the purpose of creation. Hashem will support them even if they don't work. About this, it states (Tehillim 55:23) *השליך אל ה' יהבך והוא ילכלך*, 'Cast your burden on Hashem, and He will support you.' And it states (Tehillim 37:25) *לא ראיתי צדיק נעזב וזרעו מבקש לחם*, 'I have not seen a righteous man forsaken and his seed seeking bread.' With this awareness, he will certainly make avodas Hashem his primary pursuit and his parnassah secondary (אדעי). And when one does so, Chazal say, *זוה וזה נתקיים בידו*, he will succeed in both realms. This discussion explains why saying Ashrei is a ticket to Olam HaBa. We also understand why it was established that we say Ashrei (all three times) solely during the day and not at nighttime, before Maariv. This is because a person typically toils for his parnassah during the day, as it states (Tehillim 104:23) *יצא אדם לפעלו*, 'Man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening.'" During this time, we need to be reminded that we can work less and find time for Torah and tefillah, and Hashem will support us.

Bitachon

It states (Tehillim 32:10) *והבוטח בד' חסד יסובבנו*, "For him who trusts in Hashem – Hashem's kindness will encompass him." The Midrash says on this pasuk, "Even if a person is a rasha if he trusts in Hashem, he will be enveloped in Hashem's kindness."

It states (Koheles 7:20) *כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא*, "For there is no righteous man on earth who does good and sins not." The pasuk is saying that everyone has aveiros. Reb Elchanan Wasserman zt'l proves from this pasuk that bitachon is for everyone. If one needs to be perfect to be worthy of Hashem's kindness, no one could have bitachon. So, it must be that regardless of our deeds, we can trust in Hashem and benefit from His kindness.

Another source is (Tehillim 37:3) *בטח בד' ועשה טוב*, "Trust in Hashem and do good." The Ramban says, *בטח בד'* is written in this passuk before *ועשה טוב*. This tells us that even before one does good, he can have *bitachon*.

During the times of the Chofetz Chaim, there were different opinions among the rabbanim on whether insurance (such as fire insurance) was a worthwhile investment. The Chofetz Chaim felt it wasn't.

In the year 5663 there was a fire in Radin, and two hundred houses burned down. The fire stopped just before the Chofetz Chaim's home. His house and twenty-six houses behind his were spared.

Insurance agents took advantage of this tragedy and went from house to house selling fire insurance policies. They also went to the Chofetz Chaim's house. The Chofetz Chaim wasn't home at the time, and his family bought a policy. When the Chofetz Chaim returned home and heard that his home was insured, he wasn't pleased.

A year later, after Pesach of 5664, there was another fire in Radin. This time the Chofetz Chaim's home burned down, together with the homes of his married children. The family said, "It is good that we insured our homes. We would be in trouble if we didn't buy insurance."

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "If we didn't buy the fire insurance, our houses wouldn't have burned down. The proof is that last year we didn't have insurance, and the house didn't burn down. This would have occurred this year, as well, if we didn't have insurance."

The Alter of Navardok zt'l had a small hut in the forest where he would study Torah and *mussar*. One night, he was studying Torah, and his candle blew out. He told himself, "If Hashem desires it, He will send me oil to light the lamp." He trusted in Hashem, but one is obligated to do *hishthadlus*, so he opened the door of his hut.

He saw a man walking in the forest. The Alter of Navardok asked him for oil. He had

oil, and he gave it to the Alter. It was a miracle. It was very unlikely that someone would be in the forest at that time and that he would have oil with him. The Alter was able to study Torah and *mussar* for the rest of the night.

In the morning, the Alter took the leftover oil and stored it, so he would always remember the miracle that Hashem performed for him.

Once, there was a fire in his home, and this jar of oil was consumed in the flames. The Alter commented that he was happy that this occurred "because why should I remember this episode more than all the other miracles Hashem performs for me? Every moment of life is filled with miracles."

We say, תשועת ד' כהרף עין. Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmistrifka *zt'l* explained that when people have הרף עין, which means they stop looking to people for help, that is when they receive תשועת ד', Hashem's salvation.

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* teaches, "Hashem's help arrives the moment a person doesn't see any natural means for his salvation." When all hope and plans fall apart, one turns his heart to Hashem, and that is when he has his salvation.⁵

The Minchas Elazer *zy'a* would tell the following story while performing the mitzvah of *bikur cholim* (visiting the ill):

Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev *zt'l* was ill, and his students were in the next room, saying *Tehillim*. Suddenly they heard a loud

sound. They quickly ran into their Rebbe's room to see what happened and found him lying on the floor. He had fallen off the bed. So they raised him and returned him back onto his bed.

Some hours later, the Bardichever Rav called them in and asked for a cup of tea. This was a good sign, a sign of improvement.

Soon afterwards, Reb Levi Yitzchok was standing on his feet, totally better.

He told his students, "As I was lying on my bed, I remembered what my Rebbe, the Magid of Mezritz taught, that Hashem put into the rules of nature that when one has *bitachon*, Hashem will help him. It states הבוטח בה' חסד יסובבנו, 'For him who trusts in Hashem - Hashem's kindness will encompass him.' The Magid said that this isn't a *segulah*; it is a law of nature. Whoever trusts in Hashem will be enveloped in Hashem's kindness.

"So, I thought about ideas of *bitachon* until I felt confident that Hashem would heal me. That is when I got off my bed. But when I fell to the ground, I realized that my *bitachon* wasn't yet complete. So, I continued to focus on *emunah* and *bitachon* until I became perfectly healthy."

Tax collectors came to Brisk and audited the shops. One merchant was very scared he would be fined or punished because they could discover that he wasn't reporting all of his inventory and earnings. So, he came in a hurry to the home of Reb Chaim Brisker *zt'l*. Reb Chaim learned with the man a

5. The Chazon Ish *zt'l* writes, "I don't feel that it's important to ask help from people many times. I rely on the Chofetz Chaim, who often said, 'From a human, one doesn't ask too much.' Because what is man? Only Hashem can help."

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 7) teaches that *talmidei chachamim* do not need to contribute to the communal tax designated for the city's protection. For example, if the city is collecting money to build a protective wall or weapons, the Torah scholars in that city are exempt from participating "because the Torah scholars do not need natural protection." The Torah they study protects them. Generally, it is understood that the Torah that the scholars study protects them from all harm. The Chazon Ish, however, explains that it is their *bitachon* in Hashem that protects them. The *talmidei chachamim* trust in Hashem, and therefore, they don't have to participate in the tax for protection. They are protected by Hashem due to their *bitachon*.

section in Nefesh HaChaim, which states that when one believes that everything is from Hashem and that there are no other forces and powers in the world, this belief results in salvation, and nothing can harm him. They studied this section three times, and indeed, a miracle occurred. The tax collectors left without charging the merchant. This is what happened: When the officials reached this merchant's store, they wanted to take a break. So, they put a sign on the merchant's store to remember where they were up to and where to continue after their break. When they returned, they thought the sign meant that they had already checked this store and went on to the next store.

People were saying that Reb Chaim performed a miracle. Reb Chaim corrected them. "It wasn't a miracle; it was natural. Hashem implanted into the nature of the world that He will help those who trust in Him."

Feel Your Fellow Man's Pain and Joy

At the end of the *parashah*, Aharon and Miriam spoke *lashon hara*, but only Miriam received *tzaraas*, not Aharon. Why?

The Kedushas Tzion (Rebbe Ben Tzion of Bobov *zt'l hy'd*) answers that Aharon excelled in *ahavas Yisrael*. When his fellow man had a problem, Aharon felt it as though it were his own problem. Therefore, Aharon felt Miriam's *tzaraas* as though he was also ill, so he didn't need to have *tzaraas*.

In (Shemos 4:14), when Moshe was chosen to take the Jewish people out of Mitzrayim, Hashem told Moshe *וראך ושמח בלבו*, "When [Aharon] sees you, he will rejoice in his heart." Rashi writes, "It isn't as you think that Aharon will be angry with you that you are being appointed to greatness. Therefore, Aharon was rewarded with the ornaments of the *choshen* that he wore on his heart."⁶

Aharon excelled in his love for his brothers, as it states (Avos 1:12) *הוי מתלמידיי של אהרן... אוהב את הבריות*, "Be among Aharon's students... Love people." Aharon loved people; he rejoiced in their happiness and felt their pain.

Reb Yeruchem of Mir *zt'l* once jumped onto a train just as the doors were closing, and one of his shoes got caught in the door and fell to the ground. Reb Yeruchem quickly removed his other shoe and threw it out the window. He explained, "What can I do with

6. It states in Avos (4:21) *הקנאה... מוציא את האדם מן העולם*, "Jealousy...removes a person from the world."

Mesilas Yesharim (ch.11) writes, "It is foolish to be jealous because what does one gain from it? The only one who loses is him..."

Reishis Chachmah writes, "Someone who has *kinah* is 'robbing' himself because he is always sad. Everyone finds sweetness in life, except for those who suffer from jealousy. He cannot enjoy his food if someone else has something good [that he lacks]."

The Rosh (Orchos Chaim) writes, "Jealousy is a disease that has no cure."

The Mesilas Yesharim writes, "There are people who are so foolish that when they see their fellow man has something good, they become very distressed and upset about it. Because of their sorrow, they don't enjoy anything they have... Others aren't *so* upset but are bothered by others' success. They aren't calm when they see someone reach a level that is above them unless this person is their very close friend... Most people are at this level. They aren't *baalei kinah* (constantly filled with jealousy) but are not untainted by it either..."

Any degree of jealousy destroys one's enjoyment of life, as it says (Mishlei 14:30) *ורקב עצמות קנאה*, "Envy brings rotting of the bones." Therefore, if we could free ourselves from this illness, we would lead much happier and more satisfying lives.

one shoe? Let the person who finds my shoe have a pair." This story exemplifies loving your fellow man and thinking about how to help him. Many people would make the same calculation, but the uniqueness of this story is that he thought of it right away because other people's needs were always on his mind. Most people would be upset that they lost a shoe, and by the time they think of giving away the second one, the train would be far from the station.

Someone told the Divrei Chaim of Sanz zt'l that his son, the Shinover Rav zt'l, is a great tzaddik and worthy of being a Chassidic Rebbe.

"Why do you think so?" the Sanzer Rav asked.

"Your son is a great *masmid* and a genius in Torah."

The Sanzer Rav replied, "That makes him a *talmid chacham* and a *gaon*, but that doesn't mean he is fitting to be a Rebbe."

The man replied, "Your son davens with great hislahavus, and he fasts a lot..."

The Sanzer Rav replied, "These matters indicate he is a tzaddik. But this still isn't what it takes to be a Rebbe."

The man said, "Once, in the winter, your son saw a poor person without a coat, so he gave his own coat to the poor man."

The Sanzer Rav said, "Then you are right. He does deserve to be a Rebbe!"

Reb Mottel Slonimer zt'l from Tzfas sold everything he owned to buy food for starving people. The only items he kept for himself were his tefillin and Shabbos *beketche*. Years later, he said he greatly regretted not selling his Shabbos coat. Had he sold it, he could have fed more hungry people.

Many poor and hungry people ate in Reb Mottel's home. Once, a poor man became angry about something and threw the soup in Reb Mottel's face. The poor man was immediately embarrassed by what he did,

and he ran out of the house. Reb Motel said, "Call him back. He didn't finish his soup yet."

Reb Mottel had totally forgiven him for what he did; he only wanted him to enjoy his soup.

Doing chesed should be a top priority. Time, effort, money, honor, and all other calculations shouldn't prevent us from doing chesed for a Yid. Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin zt'l says, "A day that you don't do a chesed is a dead day." Every day, we should seek opportunities to help others in need.

A chassid came to the Imrei Emes of Gur and expressed his financial worries. "I used to buy hides from a large Jewish company in Berlin and earned nicely from it. However, they recently wrote me that starting next month, they are stopping to do business with me."

The Rebbe asked, "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

The man didn't answer, so the Rebbe said, "Soon, I will be traveling with my brother-in-law and *mechuten*, the Rav of Bendin, to the Marienbad vacation resort. Enroute, we pass Berlin. Ask my brother-in-law if he agrees to make a stopover in Berlin. If he agrees, we can try to speak with these people who used to do business with you. Perhaps we can help in some way."

The chassid asked the Rav of Bendin, who agreed to the detour. So, these two tzaddikim came to the tannery in Berlin.

The owner of the tannery was immediately impressed by the appearance of his two distinguished guests. The Imrei Emes introduced himself: "I am Avraham Mordechai Alter, and in Poland, people call me the Rebbe of Gur. And this is my brother-in-law, the Rav of Bendin. We are also *mechutanim*..."

The owner jumped from excitement and asked the rebbe to repeat his words. The rebbe repeated, "I am the rebbe of Gur, and

this is my brother-in-law and *mechutan*, the Rav of Bendin."

For some reason, these words made him very happy, and he called for his business partner to come downstairs to hear what these two tzaddikim were saying. He then asked the Imrei Emes to repeat his words a third time. The Rebbe repeated his words, and the two partners danced with joy.

They explained, "We are also brothers-in-law, and we both have children of marriageable age. We wanted our children to marry one another, but we weren't certain if it was proper for brothers-in-law to be *mechutanim*. But now that we hear that you are both *mechutanim* and brothers-in-law, we understand it can be done. We dance in honor of the *shidduch*. This is like the *vort*. Our children can marry one another."

After rejoicing with them and wishing them *mazal tov*, the Imrei Emes told them about the chassid who was worried about his *parnassah*. "You wrote to him that you won't be selling to him anymore."

The owners replied, "Rebbe, we will continue working with him. There is no problem anymore."

They explained, "For a long time, we were undecided whether to do the *shidduch* or not, and this created much tension between us. The atmosphere was very uncomfortable in the workplace, so we decided to close shop and sell out. We told the chassid he couldn't buy from us anymore because we thought our business would close. But now that you taught us that brothers-in-law could be *mechutanim*, we can make the *shidduch* that we both desired, and we will be able to work together. You can tell your chassid we will do business with him as before."

The Imrei Emes said, "See the wonders of Hashem! He had a chassid complain about his *parnassah*, which brought us to Berlin to enable a *shidduch* to be finalized."

There are several lessons that we can take from this story. First, it is a story of *shidduchim*, how Hashem arranges all the necessary steps so a *shidduch* will occur. But this story is also a lesson in *chessed*. When the businessman came to the Imrei Emes and told him his problem, the Imrei Emes could have given him a *brachah* and left it at that. But he and his brother-in-law went out of their way to help their fellow man. Through their attempts, they helped the businessman and the partners in Berlin continue their *parnassah* and helped finalize a *shidduch*.

This story is often repeated to show how Hashem arranged a *shidduch* and *parnassah* in a wonderful way. Presently, we are using this story to remind us of the importance of doing *chessed*. The Imrei Emes and the Rav of Bendin devotedly tried to help a fellow *yid*, resulting in a *shidduch* and *parnassah*. Our life's mission is to help our fellow man in any way we can. When we dedicate ourselves to this goal, we will accomplish much more than we can imagine.

Reb Eliezer Gordon zt'l lived in his father-in-law's home, Reb Avraham Yitzchak, who supported him. This went on for many years.

Reb Eliezer Gordon's greatness in Torah became world-renown, and messengers of large cities came to him, asking that he become their Rav.

The first to come was a group of people from Alexat. They asked that Reb Elezar Gordon be their Rav, but his father-in-law, Reb Avraham Yitzchak, refused. He wanted to continue supporting his prestigious son-in-law. He didn't want to lose this *mitzvah*.

Reb Avraham Yitzchak's wife asked, "But how long can we support him? It is very costly, and *parnassah* is as difficult as *kriyas Yam Suf*..."

Reb Avraham Yitzchak replied, "How do we know who supports whom? We think that we are supporting him, but it could be that with his Torah, he is supporting us?"

Sometime later, a group of people came from Ashishak (a renowned city at the time). They wanted Reb Eliezer Gordon as their Rav. Once again, his father-in-law refused.

But then a group of people came from Slabodka. This was too prestigious a position to turn down, and the father-in-law agreed to permit his son-in-law to take up this position.

On the day Reb Eliezer Gordon planned to travel to Slabodka, his father-in-law came home after Shacharis while carrying his tallis and tefillin. He fell and was niftar r"l.

His wife said, "How right he was! We thought we were supporting our son-in-law, and now we know that he was supporting us!"

The Ben Ish Chai zt'l discusses the similarity and differences between the words גפן (vineyard) and נגף (plague). They are both composed of the same three letters: ג, פ, נ. The difference is the order of the letters. The Ben Ish Chai explains that the letter נו"ן stands for giving charity, and the letter פ"א stands for speech (פה), what one says after he gives tzedakah. He explains that נגף means a plague. The נו"ן represents נתינה, giving to charity. The letter is bent because it refers to someone who doesn't give much. The letter פ represents the mouth, the פה. In נגף the פ is long because he speaks a lot about the tzedakah he does.

This is the reason there is נגף, a plague. He doesn't give much tzedakah, but he always praises himself and speaks about it.

In contrast, גפן means grapes or vineyard, and it represents bounty. In this word, the פ is bent because he doesn't speak much about his charitable deeds, but he is very generous, as is represented by the long ג.

So, in review, when one gives little and always praises himself for what he does, that is a plague. But when one is generous with his tzedakah and doesn't boast or take pride in himself, this brings bounty.

This is written in last week's parashah (Bamidbar 5:11) ואיש כי יתן לכהן לו יהיה "What a man gives to a kohen shall be his." Rashi writes, ממוון הרבה - לו יהיה, He will have a lot of money.

The Belzer Rav zt'l read this Rashi, and repeated in a special tune, בפועל ממש, בפועל ממש, בפועל ממש, that it is literally so. When one gives to others, he receives Hashem's blessings. He will have ממוון הרבה, a lot of money. This is because when you open your hand to help others, Hashem bestows upon you many blessings and much bounty.

People say, "If you have, you can give." Reb Sholom of Shatz zt'l noted that the opposite is true: "If you give, you will have." When one gives to others, Hashem opens His treasures for him.

New Every Day

This week's *parashah* begins with the mitzvah of lighting the menorah. The Torah testifies (8:3), ויעש כן אהרן אל מול פני המנורה העלה, ונתיה, "Aharon did so... he lit the lamps."

Rashi explains, להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שינה, "The *pasuk* is telling Aharon's praise that he didn't change." He lit the menorah exactly as Hashem instructed. שינה can also mean "repeat." Aharon's praise is that although he lit the menorah every day for forty years, he never repeated the same deed. Each day he performed the mitzvah of lighting the menorah with renewed fervor zeal. He never repeated the *same* mitzvah. It was never dull because it felt like a mitzvah every day.

Let us discuss some ways to achieve this level.

One key is imagination.

Rebbe Mendel of Vitebsker zt'l would envision each Shabbos as if it were the first and the last Shabbos of his life. With this thought in mind, he utilized every Shabbos to its fullest extent.

Another way is to constantly increase awareness of Hashem's greatness.

Reb Sadyah Gaon zt'l was a guest in someone's home, and his host wasn't unaware he was hosting one of the greatest people in his generation. When he found out, he asked for forgiveness for not honoring him properly. Reb Sadyah Gaon responded that he had properly honored him and that there was no reason to apologize. The man replied, "Had I known who you were, I would have honored you much more!"

Reb Sadyah Gaon zt'l took from this episode an important lesson in avodas Hashem. Each day, he perceived Hashem more clearly than the previous day. Each day, he understood the greatness of Hashem on a deeper level, and therefore, did teshuvah every day. Although he honored Hashem yesterday, now that he understood even more about Hashem's greatness, he realized that yesterday's avodah was insufficient.

These might have been the ways Aharon HaKohen lit the menorah every day. It could be with the path of Reb Mendel Vitebsker, imagining each day that it was his first and the last time lighting the menorah. It could be with the approach of Reb Sadyah Gaon, who every day perceived Hashem better than before. Similarly, Aharon lit the menorah each day with greater awe.

We can also explain that it has to do with the intentions. Each day, Aharon had new intentions when he lit the menorah. We will

give examples, so the idea will be understood (although we don't know Aharon's lofty and profound intentions). One day, he may have intended that the menorah should shine the light of the Torah throughout the world. Another day, he might have thought that it should shine the light of teshuvah into the world, and so on. It was never the same, as Rashi writes *להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שינה*, he never repeated the same deed twice. Each day was different.⁷

We are discussing a very high level, but it is something we should strive for. There are mitzvos that we do every day, and it becomes routine, and we must find ways to keep it new. Either with imagination, improved awareness of Hashem's greatness, or new intentions, we should discover newness in our avodas Hashem.

It says in *Koheles*, *הבל הבלים אמר קהלת הבל* "Futility of futilities, says Koheles. Futilities, everything is foolishness" (*Koheles* 1:2). The Midrash states, "The seven *הבלים* that *Koheles* mentions correspond to the seven stages of a person's life. When a child is a year old, he is like a king sitting on a throne. Everyone hugs him and kisses him. When he turns two or three, he's like a pig that sticks its feet in the dirt. When he's ten, he jumps like a goat. When he's twenty, he neighs like a horse...as he seeks to get married. After he's married, he's like a donkey [he must work hard like a donkey to

7. At the end of *parashas Naso*, the Torah lists the *korbanos* the *nesi'im* brought for the *chanukas hamizbeiach*. Each *nasi* brought the same *korban*, and the Torah repeats the same *korbanos* twelve times.

It would seem that the Torah could have written just once the set of *korbanos* brought for *chanukas hamizbeiach* and then stated that the other eleven tribes brought the same. Why does the Torah list all the *korbanos* for the twelve *nesi'im*?

The Ramban (*Bamidbar* 7:2-5) answers that it was to honor each of the *nesi'im*.

The Ramban adds a second answer, as follows:

"Each of the *nesi'im* thought to bring sacrifices for the *chanukas hamizbeiach*, and they all thought to bring the same amount. [They weren't copying each other. Each *nasi* thought on his own to dedicate the Mishkan, and each *nasi* came up with the same *korban*.] However, they differed in their reasons. Nachshon (the *nasi* of *shevet Yehudah*) thought to bring this amount for one reason, and similarly, each of the *nesi'im* had their own reasons." The Ramban gives examples of the different reasons each *nasi* had for the same *korban*.

bring home *parnassah*]. When he has children, he becomes aggressive like a dog, to feed his family. When he's old, he is like a monkey. But that applies only to עמי הארץ, those who don't study Torah. But about Torah scholars, it states (*Koheles* 1:3) והמלך דוד זקן; even when Dovid was old, he was a king."

The Rebbe of Kotzk *zt'l* asks why the Midrash disgraces the elderly so much to call them monkeys.

He answers that monkeys imitate others. When serving Hashem, one must be true to his personality, talents, and style. If he just copies what others do, he's like a monkey.

One shouldn't copy others, and he shouldn't copy himself, either. Instead, one should strive to make his *avodas Hashem* new each day.

Beis Aharon

The 17th of Sivan is the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Aharon of Karlin *zt'l*, the Beis Aharon.

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

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

His father, the Beis Aharon, replied, "I know that you have *yiras Shamayim*, and on your own, you will try to improve the areas that need improvement. However, you mistakenly think that being sad isn't so terrible. That's why I must speak to you about always being happy."

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

A family was traveling to a *chasunah*, and a poor man on the side of the road asked if he could also ride with them. The father of the family told him, "We are traveling to a *chasunah*, and the *kallah* is in the wagon. We are all very happy. If you can be happy with us, you can travel with us. But if you will be sad, we don't want you on the wagon. We don't want you to ruin the joyous atmosphere." The Beis Aharon turned to the chasid and told him, "We have a happy chasidus. You can join us, but only if you are happy with us. However, we don't want to be drawn down with your melancholy thoughts."

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

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

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

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

Chasidim from Poland came to the Beis Aharon for a *yom tov*. (Stolin is in Belarus.) When they were ready to leave, the Beis Aharon told them, "Yidden in Poland love

to learn Torah. So do we. The difference is that we explain the Gemara (*Megilah*) שמעתתא בעי צילותא, to mean that for success in Torah, one needs to daven well. And also, to daven well, one needs to learn Torah."

The Sadegura Rebbe *zt'l* was a son-in-law of the Beis Aharon. The Sadegura chasidim would gather to discuss chasidus and avodas Hashem, and at these times, they would eat together. To raise money for their gatherings, the Sadugera Rebbe would provide a coin he blessed as a *segulah* for protection and success, and the chassidim would auction off the coin to the highest bidder.

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

Once, at a *tisch*, the Beis Aharon sent a chassid outdoors to report back what he saw. The chassid returned and said, "I saw two drunks walking together. One of them said to the other one: 'Let's hold on to each

other, so we won't fall.'" The Beis Aharon became emotional and said, "When Yidden hold on and support one another, they won't fall from their spiritual levels."

Chazal say כל הגדול מחברו יצרו גדול ממנו, "Whoever is greater, has a greater *yetzer hara*." The Beis Aharon read it, כל הגדול, whoever is great in Torah and *avodas Hashem*, מחברו, it is because he has friends. יצרו גדול, but if one has a great *yetzer hara*, הימנו, it is because he is alone.⁸

The Beis Aharon taught his *chassidim* to daven loudly, passionately, and slowly. One Shabbos, a visiting rav heard the Beis Aharon begin *Baruch She'amar*, but didn't hear him finish it. After a few moments, the rav assumed that the custom in this *beis medresh* was that the *chazan* didn't end each piece, so the rav continued to daven on his own. When the rav reached *Yishtabach*, he heard the Rebbe shout, in the renowned Stoliner tune, יחיד חי העולמים... So slow and passionate were their *tefillos*.

When the Beis Aharon was *niftar*, his son-in-law, the Sadegura Rebbe said, "The יחיד חי העולמים, the one Hashem, will remain the same, but the way my father-in-law would say those words, won't be heard again until Moshiach comes."

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

8. Someone compared friendship to a pot of *cholent*. Various ingredients are cooked together, and each ingredient picks up the taste of the others. If each ingredient were cooked separately, it wouldn't have that effect. The same is with friends. Each one picks up on the qualities of the other. But if each person remains alone, it doesn't have this effect.