

# Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita*

*Vayechi*





# Torah WELLSPRINGS

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1. Literally, the translation is: "From Asher will come rich food, and he will yield regal delicacies."

(2) Yaakov Avinu wanted to reveal when Moshiach will come, but it became concealed from him.<sup>12</sup>

(3) לָמָּהּ הִיא כְּתוּמָה מִפְּנֵי שֶׁשָּׂתֵם מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל צָרוֹת שְׂבָעוּלָם (3), "Why is this parashah closed? It is because it became closed for him all tzaros of the world."

יעקב elaborates on the third explanation. Yaakov Avinu had a very difficult life, as he said to Pharaoh (Bereishis 47:9) מִיָּמַי שָׁנִי חַיִּי "The days of the years of my life have been few and miserable". But when he came to Mitzrayim, the tzaros had ended. The parashah is closed because his tzaros closed and ended.

יעקב notes that the Midrash states שֶׁשָּׂתֵם מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל צָרוֹת שְׂבָעוּלָם, and not שֶׁנִּסְתָּם מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל צָרוֹת שְׂבָעוּלָם. The difference is that שֶׁשָּׂתֵם sounds like Yaakov stopped the tzaros, as if he did something to cause the tzaros to end, unlike שֶׁנִּסְתָּם, which would mean that the tzaros stopped *for* him, but not *by* him.

How did Yaakov stop the tzaros? Can a human being prevent tzaros from coming?

יעקב answers that Yaakov Avinu praised Hashem, even during hard times, and this stopped the harsh judgment.<sup>3</sup>

This occurred when Yosef asked Yaakov to go down to Mitzrayim. Yaakov accepted the invitation, although he knew that going

2. These first two explanations are written in Rashi, at the beginning of this week's parashah.

3. יעקב teaches that when Yaakov Avinu looked back at his life, he saw that whenever he made *hishtadlus* to help himself, the opposite occurred. This taught him to trust in Hashem alone and not trust in *hishtadlus*. (Although we are obligated to do *hishtadlus*, we aren't obligated to trust in it. We should place our trust in Hashem, alone.)

One of the times that this concept became evident was when Yaakov had to escape Eisav, so he ran to Lavan's home. He thought that this *hishtadlus* would enable him to live in tranquility. But, in the end, Lavan and his children wanted to harm Yaakov and his family. Yaakov had to escape from Lavan's home like a thief.

So, his *hishtadlus* didn't help him. Not only that, but it seems that if he hadn't done any *hishtadlus*, things may have turned out better for him, as we see from his encounter with Eisav on his way back to Eretz Canaan. Yaakov was very afraid, as it states (Bereishis 32:8) וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיִּנָּצַח לוֹ "Yaakov became very frightened and was distressed". He was afraid that Eisav would harm him. But there was nothing to fear, as it states (ibid. 33:4) וַיָּרֶץ עָשׂוֹ לִקְרֹאתוֹ וַיִּחַבְקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל צַוְּאָרְוֹ וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ "Eisav ran toward him and embraced him, and he fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." Rashi writes, "Reb Shimon bar Yochai said, 'It is known that Eisav hated Yaakov. But this time, his rachmanos overtook him, and he kissed Yaakov with all his heart. From this episode, Yaakov learned the futility of *hishtadlus* and that one must rely only on Hashem."

There was another moment when Yaakov experienced the futility of *hishtadlus*. This was when he arrived in the city of Shechem. He did everything right so that things would be peaceful for him there. As it states (Bereishis 33:18) וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב שָׁלֵם עִיר שָׁקֵם... וַיַּחֲנוּ אֶת פְּנֵי הָעִיר "Yaakov came safely to Shechem... and he encamped before the city. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 79:6) explains that וַיַּחֲנוּ אֶת פְּנֵי הָעִיר means that he did favors to the people living in Shechem. He sold them items for cheap. He wanted to befriend them so that he could live there in peace. But in Shechem, he suffered immensely from צַרַּת דִּינָה, the tzaar he had from what happened to Dinah. Once again, he saw that *hishtadlus* doesn't help.

Similarly, at the beginning of parashas Vayeshev, it states (Bereishis 37:1) וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם אֲבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. Rashi writes that he wanted to live in tranquility, and specifically then is when he suffered the tzaarah of losing Yosef.

Whenever he made *hishtadlus*, the opposite occurred. So, he decided that, from now on, he would accept Hashem's decrees with joy, and not try to make *hishtadlus* to change what is destined to be. This taught Yaakov to accept the galus with joy, and that was to his advantage, as will be explained.

down to Mitzrayim meant galus and slavery. He didn't try to change his destiny because he knew that the galus was decreed to his grandfather, Avraham Avinu, at the ברית בין הבתרים. Instead, he accepted Hashem's ruling with joy, as it states (*Bereishis* 46:1) וַיִּזְבַּח זִבְחִים לַאֱלֹהִי, אֲבִיו יִצְחָק, "He slaughtered sacrifices to the G-d of his father Yitzchak." He brought these korbanos of gratitude while he was going to Mitzrayim. It is known that Yitzchak represents מדת הגבורה, harsh justice, and Yaakov knew that there would be harsh justice in Mitzrayim, but he was happy and praised Hashem with his korban because he knew that this was Hashem's will, and he trusted that Hashem was leading him in the best way. Immediately, after Yaakov accepted Hashem's justice, Hakadosh Baruch Hu revealed himself in a vision at night and said (*ibid.* 46:3) אַל תִּירָא מִרְדָּה מִצְרַיִם כִּי לִגְוִי גָדוֹל אֶשְׁמְךָ, שָׁם, "Do not be afraid of going down to Mitzrayim, for I will make you into a great nation." When one accepts Hashem's will, with joy, things become good for him. Hashem told Yaakov that the slavery will result with אֶשְׁמְךָ שָׁם, that Yaakov's family will become a great nation, as it states

(Shemos 1:12) וַיִּכְאֹשֶׁר יַעֲקֹב אֶת־בְּנֵי יִרְבֵּה וְכֵן יִפְרֹץ, "As much as they would afflict them, so did they multiply and so did they gain strength." This all occurred because Yaakov was able to praise Hashem and accept the decrees with joy.<sup>4</sup>

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 89b) states, Yaakov would have gone down to Mitzrayim in iron chains, but his merit helped him." The merit refers to that he accepted Hashem's decree with joy. If he had tried to escape his destiny, he would have ended up going down to Mitzrayim in iron chains, but because Yaakov believed in Hashem and accepted Hashem's hashgachah with joy, he went down to Mitzrayim with honor.

Now we can understand the Midrash, שָׁפַתָּם מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל צָרוֹת שֶׁבָּעוֹלָם, that Yaakov stopped the tzaros on his own. We asked, how could a human being stop the tzaros? The answer is that he believed in Hashem, and he knew that even when something seemed bad, it could turn around and become good. The main thing is to have bitachon in Hashem, and to be *batel* to Hashem, and then he will receive the *yeshuah*.<sup>5</sup>

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4. The Rema (*Orach Chaim* 138:1) writes וַיִּכְנֹן שְׁנֵי תַחֲתֵי תְּמִיד לְקִרְא בְּדָבָר טוֹב, וַיִּסֵּים בְּדָבָר טוֹב. This means when the seven aliyos are divided and given out on Shabbos (or whenever the Torah is read b'tzibbur), it is proper that the aliyah should begin and end on a happy note, בדבר טוב. So, why does the final aliyah of parshas Vayechi end with Yosef's passing, as it states, (50:26) וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף בֶּן מֵאָה וְעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים וַיְחַנְטוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם בָּאֲרוֹן בַּמִּצְרַיִם, "Yosef was niftar at the age of one hundred ten years, and they embalmed him, and he was placed into the coffin in Mitzrayim"? Wouldn't it be proper to end the aliyah with דבר טוב, on a positive note?

Furthermore, the pasuk states וַיִּשֶׂם בָּאֲרוֹן בַּמִּצְרַיִם, that Yosef was placed in an aron in Mitzrayim. It was many years before his body was brought to Eretz Yisrael. Why does the aliyah end on this melancholy note?

We can answer that something very good actually came from this. It states (*Tehillim* 114:3) הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֶס, "The sea saw and fled," and the Midrash asks, "What did the sea see? It saw Yosef's aron." The sea split in Yosef's merit. So, for 130 years, it seemed that Yosef being buried in an aron in Mitzrayim was a disappointment, but in the end, we find out that it was to prepare the redemption of Bnei Yisrael.

After we read the final pasuk of parashas Vayechi, everyone stands up and shouts חזק חזק ונתחזק. Reb Zev of Zabarizh zt'l quoted in the name of Rebbe Aharon of Chernobyl zt'l, that חזק חזק ונתחזק means that if a person strengthens himself again and again, and when he fails, he picks himself up, over and over again, in the end, it will be ונתחזק, that Hashem will strengthen him and help him succeed in his attempts.

5. Sometimes a person feels that a פרשה סתומה "a closed parashah" has come upon him; difficult and bitter tests, and נסתמו עיניו ולבו, he feels that his heart and his eyes are closed from the tzaros. We learn from this week's parashah that this is just an illusion. In the place where we thought it was סתומה, closed, is where the words ויהי יעקב are written. This teaches us that all the tzaros were להחיותו, for his good, to life. Therefore,



## Hashem is my Shepherd

Before Yaakov blessed Yosef, he mentioned the merits of the Avos hakedoshim. He said (48:15) הָאֱלֹקִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְכֹוּ אֲבֹתַי לִפְנֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם "Hashem, before Whom my fathers Avraham and Yitzchak walked, Hashem Who sustained me as long as I am alive, until this day..." and then Yaakov blessed Yosef. Why did he mention the merits of the Avos before the brachah?

The Or HaChaim HaKadosh explains, "Yaakov first aroused Hashem's love to the [tzaddikim] of the past, as we do in *Shemonah Esrei*, for we begin with mentioning the merits of the *avos*..." In *Shemonah Esrei*, we begin with the merits of the *avos*, because in their merits, our tefillos will be answered. Yaakov did the same when he blessed Yosef and his children. He began by mentioning the merits of his parents. This is why he began with הָאֱלֹקִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְכֹוּ אֲבֹתַי לִפְנֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם, "Hashem, before Whom my fathers Avraham and Yitzchak walked..."

The Or HaChaim adds that in a concealed, humble manner, Yaakov mentioned his own merit, as well. He said, הָאֱלֹקִים הִרְעָה אֹתִי מֵעוּדֵי עַד, "Hashem Who was my shepherd for as long as I am alive, until this day..." Sheep go wherever the shepherd leads them, and this was Yaakov Avinu's loyalty to Hashem, prepared to go wherever Hashem leads him.

After Yaakov mentioned the *zechusim* of the *avos*, he began his prayer, המלאך, etc.

Chazal say, מעשי אבות סימן לבנים, the way the *avos* acted is a sign of how we, klal Yisrael, their descendants, should act, like sheep before a loyal shepherd. For example, when it comes to *parnassah*, a person should feel like a sheep who has no worries because he has a shepherd Who is taking care of him and leading him in the right way. So, it is

with all his needs. He should feel confident that Hashem is leading him, and there is no reason to worry.

The Chidushei HaRim ז"ל (אמרי הר"ם, שלח הערות) once said, אין זה הדרך שלנו... הננו הולכים אחר רצון, "This isn't our way... We follow Hashem's will like sheep following a shepherd."

There were many tzaddikim who didn't do too much *hishtadlus*. They would say, מ'דארף זיך לאזן פירען, "We have to allow ourselves to be led."

When a chosson or kallah goes to the chuppah, their parents accompany them, and there are torches at their sides. This is a reminder for the chosson and kallah, as they embark on building a home together, that they will never be alone. They will be accompanied and led from Above. Hashem will always be at their sides. And when they believe this, life will always be bright and illuminated for them.

The Nadvorna tzaddikim have a custom that when a chosson has his aliyah before his chasunah, the community sings אחד יחיד ומיוחד, as the *pekelach* (packages of sweet foods) are thrown on him. A tzaddik explained that this is to teach the chosson that he should rely on the אחד יחיד ומיוחד, the One Hashem. When he believes this, goodness will be thrown onto him from above. Until now, he was supported by his parents; now that he is beginning to support himself, he is reminded to rely on Hashem, the אחד יחיד ומיוחד.

When Yaakov blessed Ephraim and Menasheh, the Torah (48:20) says, וַיְבָרֶכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, "He blessed them on that day..."

Reb Moshe Leib Sasover ז"ל explained that he blessed them that they should only think about that day. If they have enough

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when a person has a question למה פרשה זו סתומה, why is his life "closed"? Whether the question is regarding his bank account, nachas from children, shalom bayis, and so on. He should have *emunah* that it is all for the good. It is להחיותו, to give him life. (Based on Pri Tzaddik, beginning of parashah).

for today, they should feel calm, and not worried about tomorrow.

As we wrote above, one has an obligation to do hishtadlus. But together with that, he must remember that Hashem helps, and not the hishtadlus. We see this in this week's parashah, when Yaakov blessed his son *Dan*. He added the words (49:18) לְיִשׁוּעָתְךָ קִוִּיתִי ה', "For Your salvation, I hope, Hashem." The Ksav Sofer explains that Don was powerful, and Yaakov realized that he might think that he is victorious in his wars due to his strength. Therefore, Yaakov added לְיִשׁוּעָתְךָ קִוִּיתִי ה', that the salvation and the victories come from Hashem, alone. They aren't the product of man's hishtadlus.

### Rushing Results with Regret

The chacham (quoted in Rabbeinu Yonah, Mishlei 21:5, and in (מבחר פנינים סי' ת"ע) said פרי המהירות חרטה, which means that rushing results in regret. It is better to think things through clearly and thoroughly before deciding how to act. This is alluded to in this week's parashah, when Yaakov said to Reuven (49:4) פָּתְחוּ בְּמַיִם אֶל פְּתוֹתַי, which can be translated as when one acts in haste, like rushing water, אֶל פְּתוֹתַי, there will be no gain at all. On the contrary, one loses by rushing. He is left with regret.

Reb Chaim Vital (Shaarei Kedushah 1:7) teaches, "Always remember: Don't rush to do anything or to say anything, even a simple word. First, patiently think it over and consider whether you should do it or not, because פרי המהירות חרטה, the fruit of rushing is regret. After one acts, it is too late to turn things around."

In Iyov (36:2) it states, בַּתֵּר לִי זָעִיר, "Wait a little..." בַּתֵּר is also a crown. The pasuk is saying that acquiring the trait of "waiting" and thinking things through before reacting is a crown on a person's head.

A lot of machlokes would be resolved if people would think things through before reacting in haste. Many machlokes would be avoided. Also, when it comes to aveiros, r'l, there is a great benefit to push off the aveirah

for a later time. Even if in the end he is נכשל (he commits the aveirah, r'l), nevertheless, waiting and procrastinating and pushing off the aveirah for some amount of time is also an accomplishment. Hopefully, after pushing off the aveirah for some time, he will succeed in avoiding the aveirah entirely. But even if not, he will be rewarded for his procrastination.

This lesson is taught by the Alshich HaKadosh, in his commentary on Megilas Rus. The Zohar (vol.3, 177a) states that Boaz married Rus as a form of yibum. *Machlon* was Rus's first husband, and after he died, Boaz (a close relative) performed yibum. (In those days, yibum was performed by a relative, and not always by a brother-in-law, as the halachah is today.) The Zohar says that the child who was born from this yibum, whose name was עובד, was a reincarnation of מַחֲלוֹן. From this son, עובד, Dovid HaMelech's dynasty emerged.

The Alshich asks, what happened with *Kilyon*? Nothing at all? Why was *Machlon*'s memory perpetuated with a form of *yibum*, while nothing at all became of *Kilyon*? *Kilyon* married Orpah, and we don't find that his neshamah was remembered and reincarnated with a *yibum* after his demise. What is the explanation for this?

The Alshich explains that it is because both Rus and Orpah weren't Jewish, and the brothers Machlon and Kilyon committed an aveirah by marrying them. Kilyon's aveirah was worse than Machlon's, because Kilyon was the first to marry a non-Jewish woman. At first, Machlon didn't want to marry a non-Jewish woman, but after his younger brother, Kilyon did, he followed suit. Nevertheless, he tried to avoid this aveirah, he pushed it off for some time, and he was rewarded that his name was reincarnated with a yibum.

This is his reward, because he acted without haste.



## Bitachon

In all circumstances, we must have Bitachon, as it says in the Midrash, "Everything can be attained through bitachon. If you suffer yesurim (afflictions), have bitachon. To merit Hashem's compassion, have bitachon. If you want forgiveness, have bitachon. For the redemption (from galus), have bitachon, as it states (49:18) לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה', 'For Your salvation, I trust, Hashem.'"<sup>6</sup>

Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l saw a Yid who was very worried and asked what was bothering him. The man told the Rebbe his problems. The rebbe replied, "When a Yid has a tzarah, he must say (49:18) לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה', 'For Your salvation, I hope Hashem.' If the tzarah is greater, he should say, לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה'. And if the problem is even greater, he should say ה'. לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה'."

Reb Pinchas Koritzer zt'l says, "Someone who lives with emunah and trusts in Hashem will have yeshuos and be saved in ways he never imagined." Perhaps we say לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה' in three forms (לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה', קוּיָּתִי ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ ה', קוּיָּתִי ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ ה') to hint that the salvation might come from the right, and maybe from the left, and it can come from a third place, too, from a place you never imagined.

Notice that each time one says לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה', Hashem's name comes closer to him. The first time, he says לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה', where Hashem's name appears as the third word. The second time, קוּיָּתִי ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ, "Hashem" is the second word. Finally, the third time, we say ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה', and Hashem's name is said first. This hints that the more we think

about Hashem and trust in Him, Hashem comes closer to us.

In the Sefer Torah, where it states שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֶחָד, the *is* is written with a large dalet. The Baal HaTanya zt'l said that the large dalet appears like a hammer because we have to hammer the emunah into our consciousness. The same is for bitachon. We say לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה' three times, and we speak about bitachon, until we acquire it.

Reb Shlomo Kalish zt'l was with Reb Chaim Brisker for a shalosh seudos, and he related that for twenty minutes, Reb Chaim repeated the words לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה'. This is because emunah and bitachon require constant reinforcement.

Reb Shimon Sofer zt'l (son of Ksav Sofer, Shir Meon, printed in Toras Moshe, Bechukosei, Haftarah) writes, "It is very hard to have complete bitachon in Hashem. But a person should do as much as possible, and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will help him acquire perfection in bitachon. About this, Chazal (Succah 52:) say, 'If Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't help him, he won't succeed.' A person tries to attain bitachon, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will stand by his side and help him succeed. This is the meaning of the words (Yirmiyahu 17:7) בְּרוּךְ הוֹיָה ה', הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בּוֹ. He trusts in Hashem, מִבְּטָחוֹ, and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will help him acquire perfection in bitachon."

The Beis Avraham zt'l (Chanukah, Ner 6) writes that Hashem accepts our bitachon, even when it isn't perfect. This is alluded to in the words (Tehillim 33:22) יְהִי חֶסֶדְךָ ה' עֲלֵינוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר יְהִי חֶסֶדְךָ ה' עֲלֵינוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר יְהִי חֶסֶדְךָ ה' עֲלֵינוּ לְךָ, "May Your kindness, Hashem, be upon us, as if we trusted in You."

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6. Reb Yechezkel Abramsky zt'l and a Lubavitcher chasid were detained in a Soviet prison. One day, an officer informed them that in another twenty-four hours, they would be hung r"l. Reb Yechezkel was very afraid, and the Lubavitcher chasid asked him why. Reb Yechezkel replied, "Why shouldn't I worry? The clock is clicking, and time is moving along!"

The chasid replied, "The clock is ticking, time moves on, but the Ribono Shel Olam is always here!"

They were saved. Advocates from different countries pressured the Russian government to free them. Reb Yechezkel would say that he learned bitachon from this Lubavitcher chasid.

The word **כאשר** means "as if." Even if it is only *like* we trust in Hashem, it is enough to draw down Hashem's chesed and bounty.

The root of the word **בטחון** is the three letters **ב"ת ט"ת ח"ת**. The Bas Ayin (Bamidbar) notes that all three letters have the letters **ת"ת** in them. The gematriya of **ת"ת** is 410. **קדו"ש** hints to **קדוש**. It tells us that with bitachon, one can achieve kedushah.

The Bas Ayin also teaches that **בטחון** comes from the word **ט"ח**, which means cover.<sup>7</sup> This is because the cover of kedushah (or the means to attain kedushah) is bitachon. With bitachon, one can attain kedushah.

The explanation is as follows:

Many forms of livelihood involve tests in kedushah. The internet is an example. When one has bitachon, he believes Hashem can

support him without sacrificing his kedushah. He doesn't have to go where he shouldn't or see what he shouldn't to earn parnassah. Bitachon is the cover that protects us and enables us to have kedushah.<sup>8</sup>

### The Power of Prayer

Yaakov Avinu told Yosef (48:22) **וְאֲנִי נָתַתִּי לְךָ שָׁכֶם אֶחָד עַל אֶחָיִךְ אֲשֶׁר לָקַחְתִּי מִיַּד הָאֱמֹרִי בְּחַרְבִּי וּבִקְשָׁתִּי**, "I have given you one portion over your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." This means that Yosef will inherit the city Shechem.

Literally, **בְּחַרְבִּי וּבִקְשָׁתִּי** means that the city was conquered "with my sword and with my bow", but Onkelos translates it to mean **בְּצִלּוֹתַי וּבִקְבָעוֹתַי**, "with my prayer and with my pleas."

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7. The root word of **בטחון** is **טח**, which means to cover. Kidneys are called **בטוחות** (see Tehillim 51:8, **הֵן אֲמַת חִפְצַת בְּטוּחוֹת**), and the Metzudas Tzion explains that this is because **בכליות הטוחות ומכוסות בחלב**, the kidneys are covered and concealed under the fats.

8. A person was standing on a pier, casting out a fishing rod, when someone came by to see what he was doing. He saw that instead of putting bait on the hook, this person attached a clock. "Why are you casting the clock into the water?" the man asked. "Why don't you put bait on the hook?"

"It is a great secret," the fisherman responded. "I learned it in fishing school."

"What's the secret? Please tell me."

"No. I paid a lot of money to learn this secret and will not give it away for free."

The man said, "I am willing to pay to learn the secret."

The fisherman said, "For one thousand dollars, I will tell you, and believe me, that is a low price compared to what I paid to learn this secret."

The man paid a thousand dollars, and the fisherman said, "Fish always keep their eyes open, and biologists (ichthyologists) discovered the reason: There is no clock in the water, making the fish wonder what time it is. This is why they swim about, with their eyes opened, looking for a clock."

"Amazing," said the new student. "So, when you put a clock into the water, all the fish come to see the time, and you can catch them."

"Precisely," replied the fisherman, slipping the thousand dollars he just received into his pocket.

"Tell me," asked the student, "how many fish did you catch today?"

"Today, I caught eight fish... You are the eighth one."

The nimshal is that when you access the internet to earn money, you think you are making money. Actually, it isn't money that was caught. It is you who was caught. This is the yetzer hara's way of drawing you into its trap.

It is known that Onkelos will at times veer away from the simple translation to explain what the pasuk is really saying (see Avodas Yisrael, Terumah, (ד"ה ונועדתי). He translates בחרבי as tefillos and pleas to Hashem. Although it seems that Shimon and Levi conquered Shechem with their swords and bows and arrows, they actually conquered Shechem because of Yaakov Avinu's tefillos.<sup>9</sup>

בחרבי, "my sword," according to Onkelos is בְּצִלוֹתִי, which refers to the tefillah of Shemonah Esrei. ובקשתי, "my bow," is ובקשותי, "my pleas," which refers to the tefillos one says in his own words.

Shemonah Esrei is represented by בחרבי, a sword, whereas a person's personal requests, which are said in one's own words, are represented by בקשתי, an arrow.

Meshech Chochmah explains that a sword has a sharp edge and can cause damage. An arrow, on the other hand, isn't very sharp. Its power is in the speed with which it smites a person. Shemonah Esrei is like a sharp sword, because it is very powerful and effective. The Nefesh HaChaim (Shaar 2, ch.11 onwards) describes the great *koach* the Anshei Kneses HaGedolah placed into the words of the tefillah. Tefillos that one says in one's own words are also very powerful, but their strength is specifically when they are said with force, when the words are coming forth from the depths of the heart. This is the reason such tefillos are compared to בקשתי, the bow and arrow.

The days of Shovavim start this Motzei Shabbos, and one of the primary tikunim of

Shovavim is to say Tehillim. The Divrei Yechezkel of Shinov zt'l said that a hint to this is from the first pasuk of parashas Shemos, וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרָיִם אֶת יַעֲקֹב, אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ. The roshei teivos of יִשְׂרָאֵל, the שבועות, spell השבועות, which represents to שופי תשובה, the weeks of teshuvah. The תיבות (the final letters) spell תהילים, which hints to the tikun of Shovavim that is attained by saying Tehillim.

Noda b'Yehudah (מהדור"ק א"ח ל"ה) writes, "Be very attached to saying the praises of Dovid HaMelech, a'h, for this is a great way to ignite a person's heart to love Hashem yisbarach." He writes these words to a person who needed to do teshuvah. He advised him to say a lot of Tehillim, which arouses the heart to love Hashem.

Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt'l was the Rav of Yerushalayim. In addition to all the halachos that he dealt with, he was also involved with virtually everything happening within the Jewish community in Yerushalayim. All disputes, including shalom bayis, came to his door. Everyone was astounded at how much success he had. Wherever he was involved, he succeeded and resolved all problems. People asked him how he had this *siyata dishmaya*, and he said that it was because he said the entire Tehillim every day. He added that he married after he was twenty years old. Chazal (see Kiddushin 29b) say that if one marries after twenty, he has to be cautious his entire life from forbidden thoughts. "Nothing purifies the soul more than saying Tehillim. This is the reason I am accustomed to saying the entire Tehillim, each day."<sup>10</sup>

9. Any person, even a child, who swings a sword or draws a bow and arrow will cause damage. The same is with tefillah. It doesn't make a difference who is saying the tefillah – even a child or someone who doesn't have much intelligence - it will have an effect, and the tefillos will be answered.

It states (Tehillim 18:4) מְהִלָּל אֶקְרָא ה' וּמִן אֹיְבֵי אֲנִשָּׁע "With praise I call to Hashem, and from my enemies I will be saved." The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l (quoted in אבני זכרון אות רנ"א) teaches that another translation for מְהִלָּל is confusion (see Yeshayah 1:22). The pasuk is saying that even if a person is confused when he davens, and cannot concentrate with a clear, lucid mind, nevertheless, his tefillos will be answered and וּמִן אֹיְבֵי אֲנִשָּׁע, "from my enemies I will be saved."

10. Chazal (Midrash Tehillim 1) tell us that Dovid HaMelech davened that his Tehillim should be accepted in



## Chizuk

Yaakov said to his children (49:1) הָאֶקְפוּ, "Gather and I will tell you what will happen to you at the end of days." The Satmar Rebbe zt'l asks why an unusual expression is used here for the word "happen". It states אֶת אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא אֲתֶכֶם, "what will *happen* to you." A more common expression would be אֲשֶׁר יִמָּצֵא אֲתֶכֶם, and the like.

He answers that יִקְרָא alludes to a call of love (see Rashi beginning of Vayikra). בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים, in end of days there will be difficult tests. When a person overcomes those tests, אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא, it is very precious to Hashem.

It states (Tehillim 116:6) דָּלוּתִי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ, "I was poor and He saved me." The Gemara (Pesachim 118b) explains, "The Jewish people say before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, 'Although I am poor

from mitzvos, I am Yours, וְלִי נָאִה לְהוֹשִׁיעַ, and it is beautiful and fitting that You shall save me."

The Divrei Yechezkel asks about this Midrash. The beginning contradicts its end. Because if the Jewish nation is poor from the mitzvos, why is it beautiful and fitting that Hashem should save them?

The Divrei Yechezkel answers that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has very great pleasure from our mitzvos because we are living in such a low and challenging time. Our lowliness increases the wonder and beauty of our mitzvos because they were performed amidst great challenges. He writes, חֲשׁוֹב וִיקָר, בעֵינֵי הַקֹּב"ה הַתּוֹרָה וְהַתְפִּילָה שֶׁלּוֹ יוֹתֵר מִבְּדוּרוֹת הָרִאשׁוֹנִים, "His Torah and tefillah are important and precious in Hakadosh Baruch Hu's eyes, more than those performed in the past generations." וְזֶה שֶׁאָמַר דְּלוּתִי, כִּיּוֹן שֶׁאֲנִי בְּשַׁפְלוּת... ..

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heaven, as though he was occupied with נִגְעִים וְאִדּוּלָּה (the halachos related to tzaraas and tumah meis). The simple meaning is that he requested that his Tehillim should be accepted in heaven as though he studied complex, in-depth subjects of Torah. We can also explain that a unique halachah of hilchos נִגְעִים, tzaraas, is that the tumah and the taharah of a person who has tzaraas is dependent on a kohen determining whether it is, or isn't, tzaraas. Even if someone has tzaraas, he doesn't become tamei before a kohen *says* that he is tamei. The tumah comes with the kohen's words, calling it tumah.

If the kohen isn't an expert in the halachos of tzaraas, a talmid chacham, a Yisrael, comes along with the kohen, and he tells the kohen what to say, tamei or tahor.

So, it turns out, the kohen will say tamei or tahor, even if he doesn't know exactly what he is saying, because he doesn't know the halachos of tumah and taharah. He is just repeating what the Yisrael, the expert, told him to say. This is sufficient to create tumah and taharah on the person who has the tzaraas.

We can now explain Dovid HaMelech's request, that saying Tehillim should be considered like studying about tzaraas. He intended that just as the tumah of tzaraas occurs with a kohen's words, even if he doesn't know what he is saying, so, too, a person's Tehillim should accomplish great things, even when the person doesn't know exactly what he is saying.

The Chida (Midbar Kedemos, Tehillim) writes, "The students of the Arizal teach that studying the halachos of Taharos atone for aveiros. Perhaps this was Dovid HaMelech's intention when he said that saying Tehillim should be like studying the laws of Negaim and Ohalos. He meant that reciting them should bring atonement for one's aveiros.... I saw that Rabbeinu Efraim says, 'Whoever says Tehillim every day, it is like he kept the entire Torah.' This is hinted to in the pasuk (Devarim 33:3) תָּבֹנוּ לְרַגְלֵךָ יֵשׁוּא מִנְּדָבְרֶיךָ, 'They let themselves be centered at Your feet, bearing Your words.' The roshei teivos of these words is תָּלִים, and the next pasuk is תוֹרָה צִנָּה לָנוּ מִשְׁפָּה מוֹרֶשֶׁה קְהִלָּת יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲקֹב. This hints that saying Tehillim is like keeping the entire Torah.

Also, Rabbeinu Efraim (Vayigash) teaches that (45:13) אֶת כָּל כְּבוֹדֵי בְּמִצְוֹת, the final letters spell תָּלִים. This hints that whoever recites Tehillim every day merits being under the כִּסֵּא הַכְּבוֹד, Hashem's throne.

During the days of Shovavim, minyanim are arranged for saying Tehillim. Based on the above, we understand that fortunate are those who join these minyanim.

היינו שהמצות שלי הם בדלות ובשפלות המדריגה נגד הראשונים, דלותי, "This is the meaning of", לי נאה להושיע, although I am poor... which means that my mitzvos are performed in a poor and low *madreigah* in comparison to those performed by generations of years ago, therefore, לי נאה להושיע, it is beautiful and fitting that You save me."

The Shinover Rav explains that this is the reason Moshiach will come to the later generations, and not to the previous generations, when there were greater tzaddikim, such as the Tanaim and Amoraim. Hashem favors our generation more because our struggles and challenges are greater. We are imperfect, and nevertheless, we do Hashem's will. This is very precious in Hashem's eyes.

Yaakov said to Yehudah (49:8) יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה יִדְוֹנָךְ, אֶתְּחִיךְ, and Targum Yonoson explains, "Yehudah, you admitted when it came to the story with Tamar. Therefore, the Jewish people will be named יְהוּדִים after your name, יהודה."

Similarly, the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 98:6) states, "All of our brothers will be named after you. A person doesn't say, 'I am a Reuveni' or 'I am a Shimoni,' rather he says, 'I am a יהודי.' This is Yehudah's reward because he admitted, and he wasn't embarrassed. Therefore, he merited that all of Yisrael are named after his name."

The Sfas Emes explains the depth of this lesson. Yehudah fell into an aveirah, but he didn't break, and he didn't lose hope. He rose again, as it states (49:9) מִטָּרְךָ בָּנִי עָלִיתָ. This means he rose from his descent. All Yidden are called יהודים because we all have this quality of being able to get up after falling and never giving up.

The Chidushei HaRim said that יהודה has all the letters of Hashem's name, and in addition, it has the letter דל"ת, which stands for lowliness and poorness. This means that a Yid is connected with Hashem. Even if he is at a low level, he can immediately reconnect himself with Hashem.

## Rebbe Moshe Lelover

Before Reb Moshe of Lelov zt'l (niftar 13th of Teves, 5611) got engaged, his father, Rebbe Dovid of Lelov zt'l, and his future father-in-law, the Yid HaKodesh of Peshischa zt'l, discussed the conditions for the marriage. They agreed on all points except the type of kiddushin ring to use. Rebbe Dovid of Lelov wanted the *kiddushin* ring to be silver, and the Yid HaKadosh insisted that the ring be gold. They never really resolved this matter, but since they agreed on everything else, the *shidduch* was finalized.

At the chuppah, the Yid Hakadosh saw the *chosson* holding a silver ring. He proclaimed, "Without a gold ring, there won't be a *chasunah*." A commotion arose. The wedding guests stood by, waiting for a resolution.

A simple person in the crowd realized this was his opportunity to do a great mitzvah. He asked his wife if she was willing to part with her gold ring. She agreed. They sold it to the *chosson*, and the *chuppah* commenced.

The couple who sold the gold ring was childless for many years. That year, they had a son. Chassidim say that Rebbe Dovid of Lelov and the Yid HaKodesh deliberately debated over the ring to grant this couple the opportunity to do a great mitzvah and thereby merit salvation.

Toward the end of his life, Rebbe Moshe moved to Eretz Yisrael because he saw, with his ruach hakodesh, that if he would daven at the Kosel HaMaaravi, he could bring Moshiach.

Before he undertook the journey, he went to *gezeigen* (take leave) from several of the great tzaddikim of the time. When he came to Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin zy'a, the Ruzhiner said, "Wait for me, and I will go with you."

Rebbe Moshe Lelover pointed to his white beard, implying that he was getting older and couldn't wait any longer.<sup>11</sup>

Rebbe Moshe planned to travel to Eretz Yisrael with a minyan of his followers, and he saved up money to pay for the voyage. But whenever he had saved up enough money, he gave it away for some urgent tzedakah. Then, he would start saving up once again.

Once, a wealthy, childless woman came to Rebbe Moshe of Lelov and asked for a *brachah* for children. Rebbe Moshe told her she would have a child if she gave him a large sum of money (the amount needed for the trip). She agreed to provide the funds, but Rebbe Moshe Lelover told her that she must first ask permission from her husband.

Her husband was a chassid of "The Gitte Yid" of Neustadt, and he asked the Gitte Yid whether he should give the money. His Rebbe replied, "If Rebbe Moshe guarantees a child, you can rely on that. However, before you give the money, ask Rebbe Moshe Lelover to guarantee that the child will live long because often, a child born through a miracle doesn't live long."

When the parents placed that condition before Rebbe Moshe of Lelov, he replied, "The years of your child's life will be as many as the days I live in Eretz Yisrael."

Rebbe Moshe Lelover lived in Eretz Yisrael for 74 days, and that child lived to the age of 74.

When Rebbe Moshe Lelover was on the boat, he kept saying *יום לשנה יום לשנה*, "A day for a year," which meant that he intended to live in Eretz Yisrael for 74 days, and he was 74 years old.

During the voyage to Eretz Yisrael, the ship sprang a hole and started taking on water. Rebbe Moshe placed a cloth over the hole, miraculously stopping the strong surge of water. (This cloth is now used as a *deck tichel* [veil] for the *kallahs* of Rebbe Moshe's descendants.)

During the trip, the ship docked at a deserted island. Everyone got off the boat, including Rebbe Moshe Lelover and his *gabai*. Eventually, the sailors blew their horns to call everyone back aboard. Everyone returned besides the Rebbe's *gabai*. The ship departed, and his *gabai* was left behind! The following Friday night, before saying Kiddush, Rebbe Moshe announced, "I will not make Kiddush until the *gabai* arrives." Immediately, they heard a loud thud, and the *gabai* appeared.

The *gabai* told them, "I was captured by the *other side* (*sheidim*/demons). I heard them say, 'The old tzaddik is saying that he won't make Kiddush until his *gabai* returns, but he can't do anything. The *gabai* is with us.' But their leader announced, 'This isn't a joke. If the old tzaddik said that he isn't making Kiddush until the *gabai* comes, we must obey,' and they returned me here."<sup>12</sup>

The ship docked in northern Eretz Yisrael. Rebbe Moshe Lelover visited the holy

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**11.** The Rebbe of Ruzhin said that if the Yidden in Poland were wise, they wouldn't allow Rebbe Moshe of Lelov to leave them. He found this hinted at in the Mishnah in Shabbos, אין פולין לאור הדר, "The Polish Yidden aren't wise; they had one brilliant light, and they let it go."

**12.** This remarkable story has a sequel: Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zy'a (a descendent of Rebbe Moshe Lelover) lived in Germany before World War II. It was dangerous for a Yid to be seen outdoors during those times. Nevertheless, on Friday afternoon, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai left his house to go to the mikvah because Rebbe Dovid of Lelov taught that a Yid must have mesirus nefesh for mikvah. He passed a group of Germans. They grabbed him and began beating him. Just then, a chassid, Reb Avraham Frankel z'l, passed by. Reb Avraham Frankel was a strong man, and without much trouble, he rescued Reb Moshe Mordechai from their hands. Soon, the police arrived and arrested Reb Avraham Frankel!

Later that night, before making Kiddush, Reb Moshe Mordechai repeated the story that happened to his



tzaddikim of Tzefas and Teveria and went to Meron and other places where holy tzaddikim are buried. He explained that after he gets to Yerushalayim, he will never leave her.

When he finally arrived in the Old City of Yerushalayim, he became ill. His children debated whether they should bring him to the Kosel HaMaaravi in his frail condition. Finally, they decided to take him since his main goal for coming to Eretz Yisrael was to get to the Kosel and bring Moshiach.

On the way to the Kosel, a group of Arabs began throwing rocks at them, making it impossible to get there. Shortly afterward,

he was *niftar*. Unfortunately, he never did get to the Kosel....

Before his passing, he said that the day of his *yahrtzeit* would be *mesugal* for rain, and it is unnecessary to proclaim a fast day for rain before his *yahrtzeit* passes. Reb Shmuel Salant *zt'l*, the Rav of Yerushalayim, kept this counsel. He wouldn't decree a fast day for rain until the 13<sup>th</sup> of Teves had passed.

Rebbe Moshe also said that whoever does something in honor of his *yahrtzeit* (primarily, giving food to Yidden, such as cake and *lechayim* in *beis medresh*) will merit salvation with whatever he needs.<sup>13</sup> *Zechuso Yagein Aleinu!*

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grandfather, Rebbe Moshe of Lelov. When Reb Moshe Mordechai completed the story, Reb Avraham Frankel walked in. (When one talks about a past miracle, this can cause the miracle to repeat itself.)

Rebbe Avraham Frankel said that in the police headquarters, an interrogator asked him why he was arrested. Reb Avraham replied that he didn't commit any crime. He only protected someone who was harassed and beaten by a gang. The interrogator believed him and set him free. It was miraculous!

**13.** The Gemara (Taanis 25.) says, דגמירי דמיהב יהבי מישקל לא שקלי, "We have a tradition that [Heaven] gives, but doesn't take away."

When someone told Rebbe Moshe Lelover that sometimes he earns *parnassah* but then loses it, he advised him to learn Gemara because דגמירי, when one studies גמרא, then דמיהב יהבי מישקל לא שקלי, heaven provides him with *parnassah* and doesn't take it back.