

# Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
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Shlita*

*Vayakheil - Pekudei*



# Torah WELLSPRINGS

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## Table of Contents

*Torah Wellsprings - Vayakheil - Pekudei (HaChodesh)*

<b>Bitachon without Worries .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Emunah and Bitachon .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Rising After a Fall .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Try, and Hashem will Help.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Toil in Avodas Hashem .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>One Hundred <i>Brachos Daily</i> .....</b>	<b>15</b>

# Torah Wellsprings - Vayakheil - Pekudei (HaChodesh)

## Bitachon without Worries

Although it is uncommon to use gold as thread, the kohen gadol's clothing contained gold threads. How is it made? The Torah states (39:3) וירקעו את פחי הזהב וקצץ פתילים לעשות בתוך השש מעשה התכלת ובתוך הארגמן ובתוך תולעת השני ובתוך השש מעשה חשב, "And they hammered out the sheets of gold and cut threads from them to work [the gold] into the blue wool, into the purple wool, into the crimson wool, and into the fine linen, the work of a master weaver." Sheets of gold were hammered until they were very thin, then cut into threads and woven into clothes.

The Divrei Yisrael zt'l (Modzhitz) teaches that פחי הזהב, "sheets of gold," can also be translated as "traps of gold," referring to financial worries, the trap that many people are caught in. They are worried about how they will pay their debts, marry off their children, and so on. Their fear causes them to lose their peace of mind, and they are unable to focus on Torah and tefillah. They don't have time for Torah and tefillah, either,

because they feel they need to use every free moment to earn more money.

The advice is וירקעו, which means to thin it out (see Onkelos and Rashi). Make your financial worries small in your eyes. Tell yourself, "I will manage, somehow. I have been in this situation before, and things have worked out. It will work out this time, too."<sup>1</sup>

Another way to understand the word וירקעו is from the word רקיעה-heaven, which means to trust in our Father in heaven. With these two counsels, to consider the problems small and to trust in Hashem, one is saved from the trap of financial worry. This is the meaning of the words וירקעו את פחי הזהב.

It states (Bereishis 25:23) ויאמר ה' לְרַבֵּי שָׂנִי גוֹיִם (גיים) בְּבֶטְנֶךָ, "Hashem said to her: 'Two nations are in your womb'." Rivkah Imeinu wanted to know why she had tzaar and yesurim with her pregnancy. The response she received was that she had two גיים in her womb.

It is written גיים, but we read it גוים, nations, alluding to the nations of Yaakov and Eisav. She was told that she has a painful pregnancy

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1. Metzudas Dovid on (Mishlei 12:25) דאגה בלב איש ישחנה, writes, 'If there is worry in a man's heart, he should consider it smaller than what he thinks it is.' This counsel is for all problems in life, and specifically, adds the Divrei Yisrael, for פחי הזהב, financial worries. When he considers them small, it will be easier for him to deal with them.

A technique to overcome worry is to remember the millions of times, without number, that Hashem has helped you in the past. There were times that parnassah was tight, but somehow you managed. Somehow, there was food on the table every day. Remember this, and it will give you the courage to believe that things will work out in the end.

This can be the meaning of the pasuk (Shemos 17:5) וּמִטְּבֶן אֲשֶׁר הִכִּיתָ בוֹ אֶת הַיָּאֵר קַח בְּיָדְךָ, "Your staff with which you struck the river, take in your hand and go."

Hashem told Moshe that he had used the staff to smite the Nile, and he should use it now to strike the rock and bring forth water for Bnei Yisrael. Why did Hashem tell him וּמִטְּבֶן אֲשֶׁר הִכִּיתָ בוֹ אֶת הַיָּאֵר, "Your staff with which you struck the River"? How is that relevant here? It could have simply stated וּמִטְּבֶן, take your staff!

Hashem was telling Moshe, "I have demonstrated My strength before. You saw My strength and kindness. Therefore, when I send you now to bring forth water, you can believe in Me and trust that I will perform yet another miracle to help Bnei Yisrael.

because the two children who are in her womb, Yaakov and Eisav, will be eternal rivals.

However, as we wrote, the letters of the sefer Torah are גַּיִם, which are read גַּאִים, meaning wealthy and powerful people. Rashi writes, "This alludes to Antoninus and Rebbe [Both of them were גַּאִים, extremely wealthy and powerful people.] Their tables always had radishes and lettuce in the summer and also in the winter."

It is true that a couple of thousands of years later, Rebbe would be born, a descendant of Yaakov Avinu, and Antoninus would be born, a descendant of Eisav. And it is also true that they were exceedingly wealthy. But why is it mentioned now, and

how does this explain the reason Rivkah was having a painful pregnancy?

We can explain that Rivkah's pain in pregnancy represented the worries that people have in life. The pasuk is teaching that there is no reason to worry. When Rivkah was carrying Yaakov and Eisav, already then, Hashem foresaw and prepared the parnassah of Rebbe and Antoninus, and what they would eat thousands of years later. This tells us that Hakadosh Baruch Hu takes care of all His creations, those who are alive now and those who will live in the future. Everything is planned and arranged. Therefore, why should a person have yesurim and worry regarding money matters? We are entirely in Hashem's hands, and He takes care of all our needs.<sup>2</sup>

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2. A Yid who lives in Netanya was once in Bnei Brak to take care of some errands, and someone offered him some candy and said, "Make a shehakol." He accepted and said shehakol. Then that person gave him some more candies to take home for his children." The Yid from Netanya accepted those candies, as well.

Later that day, he got onto bus #613, which runs from Bnei Brak to Netanya. Immediately upon getting on, a young man approached him and told him that he is a diabetic, and that his monitor is showing that his blood sugar is dangerously low. The lad said, "I must put some sugar into my blood immediately, or I will be in danger."

The man remembered his candies. He quickly gave them to this young person, saving his life. The lesson we learn from this story is that Hashem prepares all our needs. Hashem arranged that someone give him candy in Bnei Brak, and that he should be on the same bus as the man who desperately needed it. This is how Hashem takes care of all our needs. We never need to worry.

There was a person, we will call him ר' דוּג, who was always worried and sad. He had a friend, whom we will call ר' חיים, and as his name implies, this person was always happy and full of life. Reb Chaim once noticed that Reb Doeg was especially anxious, so he inquired what was going on. Reb Doeg replied, "Don't you know the first of the month is approaching. I have a lot of debts to pay, and my bank account is already overdrawn. How can I not worry?"

Reb Chaim replied, "I also have a lot on my mind today, but you see that I am not worried. There are many deliveries that I must make today, and some of the deliveries contain sensitive and toxic materials. There are many different addresses where I must deliver the merchandise, and if a mix-up occurs and a package goes to the wrong address, it can be extremely dangerous. So, as you see, there is a lot for me to worry about, yet I am happy and calm. This is because I trust in Hashem that everything will work out well, and that everything will be delivered to the correct destinations."

The "deliveries" Reb Chaim was referring to is the digestion tract. The food is digested, and it must go to all parts of the body. Some nutrients must go to the bones and teeth, some parts of the digested food must go to the brain, or to the heart, and so on. If the digested food ends up in the wrong places, it could be extremely dangerous. Yet, people eat, and they aren't worried. They trust in Hashem that everything will be "delivered" to where it needs to go. So, why should we worry about parnassah or any other matter? Hashem will make sure that everything works out in the best way.

With this, we can explain what we say in birkas hamazon, הוֹן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כּוֹלוֹ... כִּי הוּא נוֹתֵן לָחֶם לְכָל בָּשָׂר, "He feeds the

entire world... For He gives bread to all flesh..." Both phrases seem to be saying the same thing. They are saying that Hashem provides parnassah to all. So, why the repetition?

We can explain that the second phrase is teaching us to trust that Hashem will support us, as follows: We can explain that *כי הוא נותן לחם לכל בשר* is referring to the digested food. The Creator makes certain that each component goes to its proper destination. This wonder and hashgachah pratis helps us realize that we don't have to worry about parnassah, either.

Reb Shlomo Shlita from Yerushalayim told me the following story:

Year 5740, Tishrei, I traveled to the Viznitzer Rebbe of Monsey zy"a for the yomim tovim. I was still a bachur then, and I got to know many Viznitzer bachurim. We became good friends.

I got married in Adar, year 5741. Before the chasunah, one of my new friends sent me a letter to wish me mazal tov. (In those days, when long-distance calls were very expensive, letter writing was the standard mode of communication.) I was very happy with the letter, and I kept it together with my other important documents.

Some years later, this friend was *niftar* suddenly, leaving behind an *almanah* and a house filled with young orphans. Everyone who heard about this tragedy was heartbroken.

About a year ago, I was reviewing my old documents, and I came across the letter that I received from my friend, around forty years earlier. I read the letter once again, and I decided that I don't really need to save it any longer. But, remembering the tragedy of my friend's sudden death, I figured that perhaps the family would want the letter. So, I put it aside, intending to show it to the family and to ask them whether they wanted it.

Later that year, before Shabbos parashas *Vayakhel*, I was in America, and I met one of the children of the *niftar*. I told him about the letter I had in Eretz Yisrael and asked him whether he wanted to see it. He expressed great interest in the letter. He hardly remembered his father, and neither did any of his brothers. Their father was *niftar* when they were very young, so any information about their father was precious to them. I told him that when he visits Eretz Yisrael, he should come to my home, and I will give him the letter.

A couple of days later, I was going through my suitcase, and I found the letter in one of the compartments! I don't remember putting it there, and I don't know how it got there. It was obviously *bashert*, so that the children of the *niftar* could receive the letter sooner.

Reb Shlomo went to the Viznitzer beis medresh in Boro Park and met a Viznitzer chasid in the lobby. He asked where he could meet with one of the children of his late friend. The chasid pointed to someone sitting in the beis medresh, "He is one of the children."

I went into the beis medresh and gave the letter to the son. He was very excited to see it. After so many years since he hadn't seen his father, he received something tangible, something to spark a connection. The son told me, "It is true hashgachah pratis that we met today. I work in chinuch, and I am generally not here at this time. But tonight, my youngest brother will be getting married, so I brought him here so he can receive a brachah from the rebbe shlita before his chasunah. That is the reason you found me here. In a moment, my brother, the chasan, will come out."

The chasan came out of the rebbe's room, and his older brother showed him the letter from their father. The chasan read the letter together with his older brother, and they were amazed at what it said: "*Birchas mazal tov to the chasan that is getting married b'shah tovah u'mitzlachas...*" There were many brachos in this letter, wishing the chasan the merit to build a *bayis ne'eman b'Yisrael*. The chasan began to cry hysterically, and his older brother couldn't calm him down. The well of his tears was getting stronger and stronger, and it tore our hearts. His brother asked him why he became so emotional. The chasan replied, "I didn't tell you before, but I will tell you now. Yesterday, when I went to our father's kever, z"l, to invite him to the chasunah, as is customary, I stood at the grave and cried. I said, "Father, you left me when I was three years old, and I never got to know you. I don't remember your shining face; I have no recollection of you hugging or kissing me. Please, don't leave me. Be at my right side when I go to the chuppah. Give me a sign that you heard me request and that you will be at my *simchah*." And now, less than 24 hours later, I received this letter that my father wrote. It is a brachah for a mazal tov for the chasan who will be getting married - a brachah that he build a *bayis ne'eman b'Yisrael*."

## Emunah and Bitachon

This week's parashah discusses the twelve stones that were placed in the *choshen*. The twelve stones correspond to the twelve shevatim. One of the stones was יהלום. Rabbeinu b'Chayei (Shemos 28:9) writes, "Zevulun's stone was the יהלום. It is entirely white, like כסף, silver, and since its color is כסף, it is a sign to Zevulun's wealth, as it states (Bereishis 49:13) זְבוּלֹן לְחוּף יָמִים יִשְׁכֵּן וְהוּא לְחוּף יָם, 'Zevulun shall settle by seashores. He shall be at the ship's harbor, and his last border will reach Tzidon.'<sup>3</sup> The יהלום stone [which represents wealth] was given to Zevulun, who is successful with his business. The *segulah* of this stone is that it brings sleep onto people."

We understand from Rabbeinu b'Chayei that the יהלום has two *segulos*. It was white and silverish, and the silver (כסף) represents wealth. Also, it has a *segulah* that helps sleep.

We can explain (*b'derech tzachus*) that these two matters – sleep and wealth – go together. This is because the more a person trusts in Hashem, the more *parnassah* he will have. Sleep means that one realizes that he can go to sleep, and Hashem will give him *parnassah*. It represents that he knows that his success doesn't come from his intelligence or from his actions, and that if it weren't for the obligation to make *hishtadlus*, he could simply go to sleep and succeed just as well.

However, if a person feels awake, which means he thinks that he earns *parnassah* on his own, the wealth becomes distant from him, *chas v'shalom*.

This is the reason the יהלום represents wealth and sleep, because wealth and sleep go together. When one believes that *parnassah* is from Hashem, he will become wealthy.<sup>4</sup>

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Reb Shlomo told me this story, and he expressed the wondrous *hashgachah pratis* he saw in this story. The letter was written forty-four years earlier, and it reached the father's youngest son on the day of his *chasunah*, to give him *chizuk*, that he should feel his father's presence at his *chasunah*. The letter was in Reb Shlomo's suitcase, although Reb Shlomo has no idea how it got there, enabling him to get it to the *chasan* just in time. Furthermore, he came to the Vizhnitz beis medresh just when the niftar's sons were there. A few minutes earlier or a few minutes later, and he wouldn't find them there. He would have then probably given the letter to someone in the beis medresh, and that person would likely wait until after the *chasunah* to give it over. No one would bother the family to give them this old letter on the day of the *chasunah*.

But with *hashgachah pratis*, he met up with the *chasan* and his brother, and the *chasan's* request was fulfilled. He received the sign that he longed for. Hashem is in charge of everything, and he leads the world with *hashgachah pratis*.

When we think about this story, and many similar stories of *hashgachah pratis*, we are reminded that there is nothing to worry about. Hashem takes care of us, and He will continue to do so, forever.

3. Rashi writes, "Zevulun was always by the shore, at the port, where ships come with merchandise. Zevulun would do business with the imported merchandise [and with the profits], he would support *shevet Yissachar*, enabling them to study Torah. This is as Moshe said (Devarim 33:18) שְׂמַח וּבִלְוֵן בְּצִאתְךָ וַיִּשְׂכֵּר בְּאֵהָלֶיךָ, 'Rejoice Zevulun in your excursions, and Yissachar in your tents.' Zevulun goes out to do business, and Yissachar studies Torah."

4. The Izbiter zt'l teaches that יהלום spells יהלום, "Hashem is here." יהלום means "Here" (see Bereishis 16:13, Onkelos). So יהלום means Hashem is here. This information is important for Zevulun. He was working and wasn't able to sit in the beis medresh full-time. But since he is doing what Hashem wanted from him, Hashem was with him, always. Even as he engaged in trade, he could say, יהלום, Hashem is with me. He is with me in my work.

Rabbeinu b'Chayei writes that the יהלום is a pearl (פנינה). I heard from a tzaddik that it was appropriate that Zevulun's stone on the *choshen* was a pearl, because a pearl represents the concept of elevating the mundane

Rashi (Shemos 27:20) writes כתיב למאור ולא כתיב למנחות, pressed olives to light the menorah, but not pressed olives for the *menachos* (meal offerings).<sup>5</sup>

Chasam Sofer zt'l explains that כתיב, pressed, means to invest effort. למאור represents *ruchniyus*, and מנחות represents *parnassah*. כתיב למאור, one should work hard for *ruchniyus*, ולא כתיב למנחות, but one doesn't have to work hard for *parnassah*. He can work less, and Hashem will support him.

The *choshen* and the *efod* are two pieces of clothing belonging to the *kohen gadol*. It states (39:21) וְלֹא יִזַּח הַחֹשֶׁן מֵעַל הָאֵפֹד, "the *choshen* won't be separate from the *efod*." The *choshen* was tied from its top and from its bottom to the straps on the *efod*, and in this manner, the *choshen* didn't separate from the *efod*.

Reb Moshe Feinstein (*Darash Moshe, Titzaveh*) explains that the *choshen* and the *efod* can't be separated because they are both related. They both atone for a lack of *emunah*. Chazal (*Zevachim* 88b) say that the *choshen* atones for עיוות הדין, when there is corruption in money matters, and the *efod* atoned for *avodah zarah*. Reb Moshe Feinstein zt'l explains that both factors are a lack of *emunah*. Obviously, *avodah zarah* (which is atoned for with the *efod*) represents a lack of *emunah*, but also any kind of theft shows that one doesn't have perfect *emunah*. If he did, he would know that there is no reason to take away someone else's money. He will anyway receive what is *bashert* for him, and not a penny more, so why take from others?

Therefore, the Torah says וְלֹא יִזַּח הַחֹשֶׁן מֵעַל הָאֵפֹד, "the *choshen* shouldn't separate from

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to something special. Zevulan did that. As we wrote, Zevulan's tribe wasn't able to be in the *beis medresh* all day. They were in the workplace, making a living. But they had to remind themselves that י"ה הלוים, Hashem is there. Hashem is with us in our endeavors. Their work wasn't mundane because they sanctified their work when they gave *tzedakah* to Yissachar so they could learn Torah. This is represented by the יהלום, the pearl, which is a very beautiful item, made from something that doesn't appear attractive.

This is because a pearl is made in the following manner: An oyster lies in the sea, and if a speck of sand gets into its shell, it sends forth a white liquid that covers the intrusive sand. This continues for some time, with more and more of this white liquid covering the sand. Finally, the liquid hardens and out comes a beautiful white pearl. So, the pearl represents the creation of something beautiful from simple materials. This is appropriate for Zevulan, because although his mission in life didn't seem so spectacular, they turned their mundane acts into holiness and beauty.

Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter Shlita once came to *beis medresh* on erev Shabbos, close to the time of davening *Minchah*. Sitting there was Reb Shmuel Shapiro zt'l. Reb Shmuel was reciting *Shir HaShirim* with a lot of *kavanah* and *deveikus*, and at first, Reb Yaakov Meir was jealous of him. Reb Yaakov Meir needed to help a lot at home. He had just spent two hours of Friday afternoon cleaning the home, preparing the food, taking care of the children, etc., and he was jealous of Reb Shmuel Shapiro, who had spent two hours in the *beis medresh*, studying Torah, saying *Shir HaShirim*, and doing other holy deeds to prepare for Shabbos.

But then Reb Yaakov Meir said to himself, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted that Shmuel Shapiro should serve Him in *beis medresh*, pouring out his soul before Hashem, and from me, Yaakov Meir, Hashem wanted that I should clean the house." The trick is to remember that י"ה הלוים, Hashem is with them, no matter what they do.

There are infinite ways to serve Hashem, and when one does that which Hashem wants from him, Hashem is there, with him, and he is serving Hashem.

5. The literal explanation of Rashi is as follows: There are two ways to get olive oil. One way is to press the olives; the other is to grind the olives. When one presses the olives, the olive oil that emerges is very pure. That oil was used for the menorah. Another method to get olive oil is to grind the olives. A lower grade of oil comes from that. This can be used for the *menachos*. One doesn't have to use the best oil for the *menachos*.

the *efod*," because they are both the same concept. They both atone for a lack of emunah.

It states (38:21), אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת, "These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony..." משכן is written twice. Rashi says that it alludes to the two Batei HaMikdash that were destroyed.

Why were they destroyed? The Rebbe of Zolozitz zy" a (a student of the Magid of Mezritch) writes in his sefer Turei Zahav that the two Batei Mikdash were destroyed for אֵלֶּה. As it states אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת, the two Batei Mikdash were destroyed because of אֵלֶּה.

What is the sin of אֵלֶּה?

The Gemara (Bava Basra 88b) explains the pasuk (Devarim 25:16) כִּי תוֹעֲבֹת הֵן אֵלֶּיךָ כָּל עֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה כֹּל עֲשֵׂה עָוֹל, "For an abomination of Hashem, your G-d, are all who do this, all who act corruptly."

The pasuk is discussing people who trick people in sales by using inaccurate scales. The Torah refers to such sins as אֵלֶּה, and the Rebbe of Zolozitz zy" a says that this is also indicated to in the first pasuk of parashas Pikudei, אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת, the two Batei Mikdash were destroyed due to אֵלֶּה, theft and lack in emunah.

We can explain that theft is so severe because it means one doesn't believe in Hashem. He doesn't believe that Hashem gives everyone what they need, and there is no reason to try to take from another person. The Beis Hamikdash can only exist when there is emunah in Bnei Yisrael, and since emunah was lacking, as implied by the word אֵלֶּה, the two Batei Mikdash were destroyed.

The Yerushalmi (Rosh Hashanah 3:8) states, "When do the nations of the world make *gezeiros* [against Bnei Yisrael] and they succeed? This is when there are false scales." The Rebbe of Zolozitz quotes this source to show the severity of theft, which is a lack of emunah, and because of it, both *Batei Mikdash* were destroyed.

### Rising After a Fall

Moshe erected the Mishkan on *rosh chodesh Nisan*, as it states (Vayikra 9:1), וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי, "It was on the eighth day..." Rashi writes, "It was the eighth day of the *Milu'im*, rosh chodesh Nisan. It was on this day that the *Mishkan* was erected."

Also, in this week's parashah it states (40:17-18) וַיְהִי בַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן... בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַיּוֹקֵם הַמִּשְׁכָּן, "It was in the first month (*Nisan*)... on the first day of the month that the *Mishkan* was erected."

Before the *Mishkan* was officially erected, there was a seven-day period called the *שבעת ימי המלוואים*, to sanctify the kohanim and the *mizbeiach* for the upcoming *avodah*. Every day of the seven days of *Miluim*, Moshe would erect the *Mishkan*, perform the *avodah*, and then dismantle the *Mishkan*. This occurred every day, until the eighth day, which was rosh chodesh Nisan. On that day, Moshe erected the *Mishkan*, and it remained standing, by day and by night (until they traveled).

The Midrash (Tanchuma, Ki Sisa 35) states a *machlokes*, whether Moshe erected and dismantled the *Mishkan* twice each day of the seven days of *Miluim*, or three times each day.<sup>6</sup> The fact that the Torah tells us

6. We quote the Midrash: "Moshe was *moser nefesh* to build the *Mishkan*, therefore it is called in his name. Reb Chiya bar Yosi teaches that during the seven days of the *Milu'im*, Moshe dismantled the *Mishkan* daily and rebuilt it. Reb Chiyah HaGadol said he did that three times daily, as it states וַיִּקָּם, הַיּוֹקֵם, תְּקוּם. (It states in this week's parashah 40:18) וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן, (40:17) הַיּוֹקֵם הַמִּשְׁכָּן, (40:2) תְּקוּם אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן. The three expressions of assembling the *Mishkan* suggest that during the seven days of *Milu'im*, Moshe built the *Mishkan* three times, each day.] See how much Moshe toiled to build the *Mishkan*. If you think that shevet Levi helped him, it isn't so. Chazal tell us that Moshe built and took down the *Mishkan* by himself, and no one helped him. As it states (Bamidbar 7:1) וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם בְּלוֹת מֹשֶׁה לְהַקִּים אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן, "It was on the day that Moshe finished erecting the *Mishkan*..."

that the Mishkan was built on the eighth day, it implies that during the seven days of Miluim, even if it was built temporarily to perform the avodah of those days, it was immediately taken down.

What is the reason for this pattern? Why couldn't the Mishkan be built and left to stand? Why was it built and dismantled over and over again? The Ramban (40:2) deals with this question.

*Nesivos Shalom* *zt'l* explains that the Mishkan was built, taken down, built up again, and taken down, to give *chizuk* to the Yidden. Every Yid should turn himself into a Mishkan, a place where the *Shechinah* resides. When he serves Hashem well, he is a Mishkan. But there will be times when he will fail in his *avodas Hashem*, and he will sin, *chalilah*. When this occurs, it is like the Mishkan was taken down. But he should know that there will be good times again. He will soon perform good deeds, and the *Shechinah* will reside on him once again.

As we wrote, there is an opinion that the Mishkan was built and dismantled three times. This happened for seven days. According to one view, the Mishkan was built and dismantled 21 times during the seven days of *miluim*. ( $3 \times 7 = 21$ .) These 21 times is the gematria אהי"ה. The translation of אהי"ה is "I will be." This means that when one falls, he should tell himself, "The next time will be different. The next time, I will be

good. אהי"ה, I will be as Hashem wants me to be." It isn't easy to keep saying this, especially after falling 21 times, and he feels that he can never succeed. But if he continuously keeps trying, he will succeed in the end.

The *Nesivos Shalom* quotes from the Beis Avraham אהי"ה times אהי"ה ( $21 \times 21$ ) equals the gematria of אמ"ת. "This is because the אמ"ת is that even if a Yid accepted upon himself many times to be good, and still he fell again, nevertheless, he should try again. If he does so, the truth is that Hashem will accept him with love."

Shabbos HaChodesh gives us the message of "Renew yourself. תתחדש. What was until now, was. Now start again. Don't remain in your fallen state. Pick yourself up and maybe this time you will succeed in being as a Yid should be.

Tzaddikim have said that this is the segulah of this Shabbos, to begin again, to begin anew.<sup>7</sup>

The first mitzvah given to Bnei Yisrael is the mitzvah of *kidush hachodesh* (see Rashi, Bereishis 1:1). We can explain that it is the first mitzvah because the attitude of making oneself new and starting over again is the first step and the foundation of *avodas Hashem*. Just as the moon becomes new each month, we should work to forget about the past and make the future better.

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It doesn't state וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם כִּלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהִקְיִם אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן "It was on the day that Yisrael finished erecting the Mishkan". Since he toiled to build it, it is called in Moshe's name."

7. Reb Yaakov Eliyahu Lazar *zt'l* was by the Shinover Rav *zt'l* for Shabbos Parah. On Sunday, he came to say take leave (*gezegeben*), and go home. The Shinover Rav asked him, "Are you leaving already? So soon?"

The *gabai* was present, and he understood that the Rebbe wanted Reb Lazar to stay longer, so he quickly spoke up for Reb Lazar. "No, Reb Lazar will remain with us for a few more days."

The Shinover Rav replied, "That's good, because it's very important for one to be with his rebbe for Shabbos HaChodesh. On this Shabbos, one can become a new person."

Reb Lazar would often speak nostalgically about that Shabbos. He said it's impossible to repeat what he saw that Shabbos. He only revealed one thing: When he davened אהבה רבה in *Shacharis*, he was suddenly overcome by emotion and left the beis medresh and cried profusely from *deveikus*. He felt that he had become a new person.

Rebbe Aharon Chernobyler zt'l teaches, חזק חזק, that if a person strengthens himself and begins anew, again and again, ונתחזק, he will be helped from Heaven. He will receive strength from Heaven to improve his ways.

It states (Shemos 17:11) וְהָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר יָרִים מֹשֶׁה יָדוֹ וְגָבַר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכַאֲשֶׁר יִנְיֵה יָדוֹ וְגָבַר עַמְלֵק "It happened that when Moshe raised his hand, Yisrael was stronger, and when he lowered his hand, Amalek was stronger."

We wonder why Moshe lowered his hands in this war. When he put down his hands, Amalek became stronger, so why did he put down his hands? (Although we have no perception of Moshe Rabbeinu's greatness, we ask the question to learn lessons that are applicable for ourselves.) But it is known that the war against Amalek represents the war we fight against the *yetzer hara*. It is the war that every Yid fights, in every generation. The pasuk is hinting to us that the pattern of this war isn't solely successes. There are times that וְגָבַר עַמְלֵק, Amalek becomes strong. There will be times when we will lower our hands and fail in

our avodas Hashem. The pasuk is encouraging us by letting us know that this is the pattern, and it can't be changed. But if a person doesn't lose hope, and he keeps trying to raise his hands and battle against the *yetzer hara*, he will win the battle, in the end.<sup>8</sup>

### Try, and Hashem will Help

It states (Shemos 35:27), וְהַנְּשִׂימִים הֵבִיאוּ אֶת אַבְנֵי הַנְּסִי'ִים וְאֶת אַבְנֵי הַמְּלוּאִים לְאִפּוֹד וּלְחֹשֶׁן "The *nesi'im* brought the *shoham* stones and the [filling] stones for the *eifod* and for the *choshen*." Where did the *nesi'im* obtain these precious gems? Did they own them? Were they found in the desert?

Targum Yonason writes, "The clouds of glory went to Pishon and picked up precious stones...to be placed in the *eifod* and *choshen*."

The Gemara elaborates (Yoma 75.): When the *mon* rained down from heaven, precious stones came down together with the *mon*. The *nesi'im* gathered those precious stones and donated them to the Mishkan (for the כְּהוֹנֵה<sup>9</sup>)

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8. In our generation, there is the invention of "synthetic grass (turf)." This is a rubber mat that appears like grass, and people spread it over their lawn. Instead of working hard, planting, watering, weeding, and mowing to make a garden look fresh and green, one can roll out a mat of artificial grass, and it appears like the ground is covered with fresh grass. How can one tell the difference between an artificial lawn and the "real thing"? The test is as follows: Look closely at the blades of grass. If there are some dry blades, colored brown or yellow, that don't appear healthy, you can be certain that you are looking at real grass. Also, patches and areas in the garden where the grass didn't grow at all are also a sign that this is real grass. But if the garden is perfectly covered in green, it is most likely fake.

Similarly, true avodas Hashem has ups and downs. That is natural, and it can't be otherwise. If everything is perfect, something is off.

It is known that during the weeks of the Four Parshiyos (שְׁקִלִים, זְכוֹר, פְּרָה, חוֹדֶשׁ) there is a שַׁבַּת הַפְּסָקָה, a Shabbos that is a break, and none of the four parshiyos are read. (For example, this year, after Shabbos parashas Shekalim, there was a break, a Shabbos Hafsakah.) The Yerushalmi says that there is never a Shabbos Hafsakah between Parah and HaChodesh. There can be a Shabbos Hafsakah after parashas Shekalim or after Shabbos Zachur, but never after Shabbos Parah. The next Shabbos will always be parashas HaChodesh.

*B'derech remez*, we can explain that *Parah* represents *teshuvaah*, when one purifies himself from aveiros, it is dangerous to linger there. When one does *teshuvaah*, he must immediately start anew. If he remains and wallows in his regret over his past errors, he might end up becoming sad, *chalilah*. Therefore, there is never a Shabbos Hafsakah after parashas Parah. Immediately after the *teshuvaah* of parashas Parah, we come to Shabbos HaChodesh, when we change and improve our ways.

9. There are two definitions of נְשִׂאִים:

(1) The *nesi'im* are the leaders of the nation.

We learn from this the power of desire. When one yearns to serve Hashem, Hashem helps him succeed. Hashem commanded that the בגדי כהונה should be made with precious stones. Where will they get them? How can they find them in the desert? But when there's a will, Hashem helps. The עניי הכבוד delivered the stones to them.

As the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Toras Moshe, Terumah* (אשר ידבנו לבו) writes, "When one desires to donate, but he doesn't have enough money [Hashem will help him]. This happened to the *nesi'im*. They wanted to donate the stones for the *kohanim's* clothing, but they didn't own gems. Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought the gems to them in the clouds. When they collected the *mon*, they collected the gems. This teaches us that when a person desires to do something, but isn't able to... I will enable him to do so."

As the Mesilas Yesharim (19) writes, "If one asks, who am I, and how important am I really, that I should daven for [the gathering of] the galus and for Yerushalayim? Could it be that because of my tefillah, the galus will end, and the redemption will sprout? The answer is, as Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 37.) say, man was created alone, to demonstrate 'The world was created for me.' Hashem has pleasure when His children pray for this matter. Even if the prayers cannot be answered (because the time hasn't come yet, or because of some other reason), nevertheless, they did their share, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is happy with them... We are obligated to pray, and

we shouldn't refrain due to a lack of strength. As Chazal (*Avos* 2) say, לא עליך המלאכה לגמור ואי אתה בן חורין לפטר הימנה, 'You are not obligated to finish, but you don't have the right to refrain...'<sup>10</sup>

### Toil in Avodas Hashem

It states (*37:1-2*), ויעש בצלאל את הארון עצי שטים... ויצפהו זהב טהור מבית ומחוץ, "Betzalel made the *aron* from *shittim* wood... and covered it with pure gold, inside and outside.

The *pasuk* says that there were three *aronos*, one inside the other. The innermost box was gold, the outermost was gold, and the middle was made of wood.

This represents the three stages of *teshuvah*:

(1) The golden era is the beginning of one's *teshuvah*. That is when Hashem is helping him, and he is succeeding in his *teshuvah* process.

(2) Then comes the struggle because it isn't easy forever. Hashem takes away the initial euphoria and "light" that prevailed at the beginning of the *teshuvah*, and now the person must walk on his own. He is confronted with hardships and tests and isn't confident he can succeed.

(3) If he keeps trying, he will reach the golden, third era. He will succeed in his *teshuvah*.

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(2) *Nesi'im* also means clouds.

Both definitions are correct. והנשיאים הביאו את אבני השפה ואת אבני המלואים, the clouds and the *nesi'im* brought the precious stones to be used for the *kohen gadol's* clothing.

10. My father *zy'a* told me that when he was a child living in Tel Aviv, one night there was no running water in their home. Every night, my father and his brothers would prepare *negel vasser* next to their beds before going to sleep, but that night, they went to sleep without preparing water. Their father, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zt'l*, asked them, "Why didn't you prepare *negel vasser*?"

They replied, "We couldn't. There's no water."

"That's true," their father replied, "but why didn't you at least place the empty *negel vasser* utensils near your bed?" Because a Yid must do what he can, and Hashem will help.

These three stages also exist when one desires to grow in Torah. At the beginning of his resolve to learn Torah, he is interested, inspired, and excited. The Torah is sweet to him.

Then come the challenging times: He doesn't understand; he is not keeping up with the pace he initially set for himself. He wonders whether success in Torah is possible for him.

But if he keeps trying, he will reach the third stage, which is when he truly loves Torah, and understands it. The Torah will now be sweeter to him than ever before.

The *aron's* three boxes represent these three stages. But notice that the *aron* is called, ארון עצי שיטים, an *aron* of wood. It isn't called ארון של זהב, "a golden *aron*." To teach that the essential stage and the real purpose is the struggle (represented by the wood).<sup>11</sup>

When the Torah lists the items that Yidden donated to the Mishkan, they are listed in the order of the most precious to the least expensive. As it states (35:5), זהב וכסף, ונחשת, gold, silver, and copper..." and so on.

But then it states (35:9), אבני שהם ואבני מלואים, the precious gems that were to be used for the בגדי כהונה. These gems were the most precious items - more precious than gold and silver - but they are listed at the end of the list. Why?

The same question appears in *parashas Terumah* when Hashem told the Jewish nation to donate these items to the Mishkan. The *pasuk* begins with (Shemos 25:7) זהב, וכסף, ונחשת, listing the items in the order of most precious to the least expensive. And then, at the end of the list, the precious gems are

listed. As it states (25:9), ואבני שהם ואבני מלואים, לאפור ולחשן.

The Or HaChaim (*Terumah* 25:7) asks:

"We have to understand why אבני שהם ואבני מלואים are written only after the eleven items. Since the stones were more precious, it would be proper to write them first, before זהב וכסף ונחשת."

One of the Or HaChaim's answers is that these precious stones were brought without toil since they came down with the *mon*. The *nesi'im* only had to go and pick them up. Although they were the most expensive, the donation ranked lower because they were brought without toil. They didn't compare themselves to the donations that people gave from their own pockets, even when those donations were of a lesser value.

This is an important lesson for us. If you find *avodas Hashem* difficult, be happy with that because that is how *avodas Hashem* is meant to be.

There was a soldier in Czar Nicholai's army who enjoyed drinking, and when he ran out of money, he gave all his weapons to the owner of a tavern, as collateral, in exchange for drinks. To appear that he was armed with weapons, he carried a large bag around, so people would think his weapons were inside the bag.

One day, Czar Nicholai visited the army base. He was pleased with the order and discipline he saw. But then he called over this soldier and asked him to open the bag. It was filled with straw, and he was punished severely.

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11. Chazal tell us that Moshe understood how all the utensils of the Mishkan should appear, but Moshe didn't comprehend the design of the menorah. Therefore, Hashem instructed him to throw the gold into fire, and it miraculously became a menorah. Which aspect of the menorah didn't Moshe understand?

The menorah was made from pure gold; it didn't have any wood at all. Wood represents the *yetzer hara*, challenges. Moshe didn't understand why Hashem would have a *nachas ruach*, pleasure, from any mitzvah that is perfect like gold, without any challenges or *yetzer hara* at all.

Rebbe Asher of Stolin *zy'a* repeated this story and asked: How did Czar Nicholas know to ask specifically this soldier to open his bag? Other soldiers were going about carrying their bags, and the Czar didn't suspect them. What about this soldier that roused his suspicion?

The answer is, the Czar saw that the soldier was carrying his bag without difficulty. That aroused the Czar's suspicion because weapons are heavy.

Rebbe Asher of Stolin said that similarly, *avodas Hashem* is meant to be a challenge. If it is easy, that's a sign that something is wrong. There should be struggles. One should feel like he's working hard, putting in an effort. If it is too easy, something is lacking.

If *avodas Hashem* is easy, the reward is far less.

As it states in *Avos d'Reb Noson* (3:6), "Performing the mitzvos once with *tzaar* is equivalent to a hundred times without hardships."

And *Sefer Chassidim* (145) states, "When one triumphs over his *yetzer hara*, the reward will be greater than the reward given for a hundred mitzvos, performed without hardships."

And as Chazal (*Avos* 5:23) say, לפום צערא אגרא, "the reward is in accordance with the hardships."

*Pirkei Avos* is *Mishnayos*, which are written in *lashon hakadosh*. So why does it say (*Avos* 5:23), לפום צערא אגרא in Aramaic?

*Tosfos* (*Brachos* 3.) writes, "We say Kaddish in Aramaic because it is a beautiful praise, and we don't want the *malachim* to understand what we are saying and be jealous of us." Similarly, the phrase לפום צערא אגרא is written in Aramaic, because it is a great praise when a Yid overcomes his challenges to serve Hashem. We don't want to rouse the *malachim's* jealousy. Therefore, it is written in Aramaic.<sup>12</sup>

A group of chassidim complained to the Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* about their *yetzer hara*. The Chidushei HaRim told them, "What purpose would there be to life if there wasn't a *yetzer hara*?"<sup>13</sup>

The Yidden in the desert complained (*Shemos* 16:3), מי יתן ... בארץ מצרים בשבתנו על סיר הבשר, באכלנו לחם לשובע, "If only...we were in Mitzrayim, where we sat near the pot of meat, and we ate bread to satiation." According to the simple meaning, they complained that they didn't have meat any longer and that they didn't have bread.

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**12.** Rebbe Mordechai Nadvorna *zt'l* said, "There's a *malach* that has a thousand tongues. When he sings, the music is incredibly stunning. But Hashem has greater pleasure from a Yid when he puts his hand behind his ear and sings *zemiros* Friday night."

Although the *malachim* serve Hashem better than we can, our *avodas Hashem* requires effort (for example, to sing, one has to consciously make an effort to put aside all his worries, and immerse himself in the praise of Hashem), and that is why it is way more precious to Hashem than the perfect *zemiros* of the *malachim*.

Chazal (*Yoma* 69:) tell us that the Anshei Kneses HaGedolah succeeded in abolishing the *yetzer hara* for *avodah zarah* and the *yetzer hara* for *arayos* among family members.

It seems that this was a wonderful accomplishment. However, the Chazon Ish *zt'l* said that these matters aren't anything to be proud of. It would be better if we had the *yetzer hara* and then triumph over it with our good choices.

**13.** When a person makes a *brachah* on an esrog and lulav, the *pitom* is down. In Yiddish, this is called, מיט די פיטום אראפ, which is also an expression used for someone who is going through difficult times. We make a *brachah* specifically when the *pitom* is down because the challenging moments are the most significant one of our life.

However, the Chasam Sofer zt'l explains that they couldn't have eaten the meat because it wasn't kosher. They were saying that they remember how it was in Mitzrayim, בשבתנו על סיר הבשר, when we sat next to the Egyptians who were cooking pots filled with non-kosher meat, באכלנו להם לשובע, but we didn't partake in the non-Kosher foods. We passed the test, and we ate bread alone.

They were reminiscing about how it was in Mitzrayim when they were faced with great tests. They missed the tests because passing them is the purpose of life.<sup>14</sup>

### One Hundred Brachos Daily

It states (38:27), ויהי מאת ככר הכסף לצקת את אדני, הקדש... מאת אדנים "The one hundred *kikar* of silver should be used to make the holy *adanim* – one hundred *adanim*..." These were the 100 silver foundations of the Mishkan.

The Baal HaTurim writes, כנגדם תקנו ק' ברכות, בכל יום "Corresponding to the one hundred

*adanim* the *chachamim* established one hundred daily *brachos*."

The Chidushei HaRim zt'l says that Hashem resided on the Mishkan, and today Hashem resides in Yidden. The Mishkan in our generation is every single Yid, when he merits that Hashem resides in him. The original Mishkan had one hundred *adanim* for its foundations. The foundations of today's Mishkan are the one hundred daily *brachos* we recite. They are called אדנים because with them we become aware that Hashem is the אדון, master of the world.

The *Tur* (Orach Chaim 46) writes, "Every day, one hundred people of Bnei Yisrael died, and they didn't know why this was happening. Dovid HaMelech investigated, understood with his *ruach hakodesh*, and instituted that Klal Yisrael should recite one hundred *brachos* every day. Therefore, the *chachamim* established *birchas hashachar* [the *brachos* said in the morning at the beginning

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14. The Ketzos (*Shev Shmatsa, hakdamah* 6) quotes the Mahara'm Almushneinu, who explains that the most outstanding geniuses are those who have a drop of foolishness in their thinking process. They work to circumvent the foolish part of their mind, which makes them very wise.

The Mahara'm Almushneinu writes that a similar thing can be seen when a drop of water drips into a large bonfire. The fire becomes more vigorous. The water doesn't weaken the fire because the fire fights to overcome the water that tried to extinguish it. Similarly, we see that people who have straightforward minds are often not the smartest. But those who have a problem with their thinking process are forced to overcome that obstacle, which makes them even wiser.

This is alluded to in the *pasuk* (*Koheles* 10:1), יקר מחכמה ומכבוד סכלות מעט, "A person who is respected because of his wisdom and honor, it is due to a bit of foolishness."

The Mahara'm Almushneinu explains that the Torah calls the *yetzer hara* טוב מאד because it makes the *person* טוב מאד, very good. The *yetzer hara* places obstacles in a person's way, and when one overcomes them, he becomes טוב מאד.

The Alter of Navorduk zt'l taught the following parable:

A worm was inside the neck of an oil lamp, and it didn't know where to go. When the worm went up, it felt the heat from the flame that was lit above the lamp, and it backed down. But as it went down, it met with the oil, which is also not an option. Eventually, the worm fell into the oil and drowned.

This parable reminds us that we shouldn't back off when there are struggles. We should face them because through them we reach the highest levels.

As the Vilna Gaon said, העקשן יצליח, "Those who are stubborn [in the war against the *yetzer hara*] will succeed."

of the *tefillah*] to fill the quota of one hundred daily *brachos*".

The Prishah explains, "When a hundred people were dying each day, Dovid established that we say one hundred daily *brachos*, because that will stop the deaths... Dovid taught the secret of one hundred *brachos* to the Sanhedrin, so they should institute the *brachos* as they see fit. They established the *brachos* with their wisdom..."

How did the one hundred *brachos* halt the daily one hundred deaths?

The Levush explains that Hashem does much kindness with the Jewish nation, but people take it all for granted, and they don't express their gratitude to Hashem. Dovid HaMelech realized that this was the source of the plague, so the solution was to praise Hashem. The solution proved to be correct because "from the time Dovid instituted this *takanah*, the plague ceased."

The *sefarim* say that just as one hundred *brachos* daily saved us in the past, they continue to provide protection for all generations.