

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Noach



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Torah Wellsprings - Noach

Chen

At the end of last week's parashah, it states (6:8) וַנַּח מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה', "and Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem." The Or HaChaim explains, "There is a single mitzvah, or perhaps three or four mitzvos that are *mesugal* for *chen*." Noach performed those mitzvos, and Hashem found *chen* in him.

Of course, we all want to perform the mitzvah (or mitzvos) that grant us *chen*, but we don't know which ones they are!

Some explain that the answer is hinted in the words וַנַּח מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה'. Whether he was going through hard times or good times, Noach knew it was בְּעֵינֵי ה', by Hashem's *hashgachah*. Because of this *emunah*, he found *chen* in Hashem's eyes.

The Ben Ish Chai (*Ben Yohoyada*, *Beitzah* 16.) adds that *bitachon* is *mesugal* for *chen*. The hint is that the word בְּטַחֲוֹן is comprised of two words: חֵן - טוב. "Because through בְּטַחֲוֹן, one merits חֵן and טוב, goodness."

This is hinted in the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 84:12), חֵן וְכִבוֹד יִתֵּן ה' לֹא יִמְנַע טוֹב לְהוֹלְכִים בְּתַמִּים, "Hashem will give *chen* and honor; He will not withhold good from those who go with sincerity (*bitachon*)." So, we see that Hashem gives *chen* to those who have *bitachon*.

The Chareidim (*Mitzvas Asei* 1) writes, "Noach was always calm and tranquil. Therefore, it states, וַנַּח מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה', the Midrash explains, his calm and tranquil attitude found favor with Hashem. Because tranquility comes from the side of *kedushah*, and anger comes from the side of *tumah*."

There are more ideas on how Noach attained *chen*, and we will discuss them in the following sections.

Yiras Shamayim brings Chen

The Gemara (*Succah* 49:) states, "If a person has *chen*, you can be certain that he fears Hashem." This is because *yiras Hashem* results in *chen*. So, we can explain that Noach had *chen* because of his *yiras Shamayim*.

In particular, being cautious with *kedushah* leads to *chen*. It states (6:8) וַנַּח מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה', "Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem." The Beis Avraham *zt'l* taught that Noach found *chen* בְּעֵינֵי ה' because he was cautious with his eyes.

The final words of the Torah (34:12) are לְעֵינֵי כָל יִשְׂרָאֵל, "before the eyes of all Yisrael," and connects with the first word of the Torah, בְּרֵאשִׁית, because the foundation and the beginning of the Torah is to be cautious with one's eyes.¹

The Torah (9:23) tells us that Shem and Yefes covered their father, Noach, and for this good deed, Yefes was rewarded that his descendants were brought to burial, and Shem was rewarded with the mitzvah of *tzitzis*. Rashi writes that Shem receives a greater reward than Yefes because, שְׁנַתְּאֵמֵץ, "Shem exerted himself more than Yefes" in this mitzvah.

They both covered their father. But Shem was more motivated; therefore, he was rewarded with *tzitzis*. Yefes performed the mitzvah without interest, with a dead heart, and consequently, he received a reward fitting for the dead - burial.

1. On the *pasuk* לְעֵינֵי כָל יִשְׂרָאֵל, Rashi writes, זוּ שְׁבִירַת הַלּוּחֹת, this refers to when Moshe broke the *luchos*." The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said that *pasuk* hints that when one isn't careful with his eyes, that's like שְׁבִירַת הַלּוּחֹת, the shattering of the *luchos*, *chas veshalom*.

When Shem and Yefes went to cover Noach, they walked backward so they wouldn't see Noach unclothed. While covering him, they had to turn towards their father, but they did the most they could in that situation and turned their faces away.

Rashi (9:23) says that this is the reason it states *אחורנית*, backward, twice in this *pasuk* (see footnote).² One refers to when they entered the room, and the other *אחורנית* is when they covered their father. At that time, their bodies faced Noach, but they turned their faces away.

The Alshich HaKadosh asks, why didn't they simply close their eyes?

The Alshich answers that even to face an *ervah* creates a *p'gam*, a blemish, on one's soul. Shem and Yefes didn't want to see or even face an *ervah*.

In contrast, the Torah (9:24) tells us, וירא חם, "Cham, the father of Canaan saw his father's *ervah*." Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 70) reveal other terrible sins that Cham did to his father, but from the literal words of the *pasuk*, it seems that Cham's sin was that he saw his father's *ervah*. The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said we should learn from this the severity of not guarding one's eyes. For that sin alone, Cham deserved all the curses he received.³

2. The *pasuk* (9:23) states: ויקח שם ויפת את השמלה וישימו על שכם שניהם וילכו אחרנית ויכסו את ערות אביהם ופניהם אחרנית וערות אביהם לא ראו.

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* (*Chofetz Chaim, Asei* 2) writes, "It isn't for nothing that the Torah writes the story of Noach (9:21-22), how he became drunk and disgraced, and Shem and Yefes covered him. Noach blessed them, and his *brachos* took effect. This is to teach us that one must seek, with all his strength, to conceal and to cover his fellow man's disgrace, as one would do for himself."

3. A *yeshiva bachur* in Yerushalayim made a *kabbalah* one Elul that he won't leave the *yeshiva* for the entire month, so his eyes will stay pure.

But during Elul, he developed a rash, and his parents wanted him to see a doctor. "I'll go after Elul," he told his parents, not wanting to compromise his *kabbalah*.

The parents spoke with the *rosh yeshiva* Reb Yehudah Cohen Shlita and expressed their concern. The next morning, after *shacharis*, the *rosh yeshiva* called over the *bachur* and told him to go to a doctor, as his parents requested. The *bachur* began to cry.

The *rosh yeshiva* realized how sincere the *bachur* was in his resolve, so he said, "Come to me this afternoon. I have to think this through."

That afternoon, a doctor from Brazil came to the *yeshiva*. He said to the *rosh yeshiva*, "I saw you at a *chasunah* last week, and I'm concerned about a blotch I saw on your skin. I came to make certain that everything is well."

After the examination, the doctor concluded that the *rosh yeshiva* was fine. The *rosh yeshiva* thanked him and asked him if he can look at one of the *bachurim* in the *yeshiva* who had a terrible rash but refused to see a doctor because of his *kabbalah*.

The doctor agreed to see the *bachur*, and prescribed a specific ointment, which by *hashgachah pratis*, the doctor had with him.

The lesson we learn from this story is that when a person desires to be holy, Hashem will help him.

One elderly Yid said on his deathbed that he isn't afraid of the judgment in heaven because he guarded his eyes. He described how he did it: "When I walked down a street guarding my eyes, I considered it like I earned five dollars. If it was a bigger street, I counted it like I earned ten dollars. And if it was a major street, and I guarded my eyes, I considered it like I earned twenty dollars. At the end of the day, I calculated how much 'money' I earned, and I would calculate how much money I earned over the years I guarded my eyes. I've earned so much over the years I consider myself a multimillionaire. I'm not afraid to stand before the court in heaven. I'm coming prepared..."

Yosef HaTzaddik guarded his eyes and became very wealthy. The Baal Shem Tov (*Lech Lecha* 3) proves from this that *shemiras einayim* and other precautions in the area of *kedushah* are *mesugal* for wealth.

The Skulener Rebbe of Monsey Shlita related that someone once came to his father *zt'l* seeking a *segulah* for *parnassah*. The Rebbe told him to say *פרשת היראה* (printed after *shacharis* in many siddurim). The man thought the Rebbe didn't understand him, so he explained that he wasn't seeking a *segulah* for *yiras Shamayim*; he was seeking a *segulah* for *parnassah*. The Rebbe replied that it states (*Tehillim* 111:5), *טַרְף, נתן ליראי* "Hashem gave food to those who fear Him." If you fear Hashem, you will have *parnassah*.⁴

Passing Tests Results in Chen

The Sfas Emes (*Noach* 5656) writes, "When a person has a pure soul, he receives a *tzelem Elokim*. And when one has the *tzelem Elokim*, he has *chen*." When a person is pure and spiritual, *tzelem Elokim* will shine on his face. The glow of his *tzelem Elokim* grants him *chen*. However, the Sfas Emes writes that a

condition for attaining *tzelem Elokim* is *taharah*, purity. How does one become pure? The Sfas Emes writes, "This is when one passes the tests related to *kinah*, *taavah*, *v'kavod* (jealousy, temptation, and honor)."

When Noach left the *teivah*, he offered up *korbanos*. Hashem said (8:21), *לא אסף לקלל עוד את, האדמה בעבור האדם כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעריו*, "I will never again curse the earth because of man because man's heart is bad from his birth." If man's heart is evil, isn't that a reason to punish him? How do we understand the *pasuk*?

The Magid of Mezritz *zt'l* (quoted in *Kedushas Levi*) explains that man's corrupt heart, when overcome, is a source of immense pleasure for Hashem. Hashem says that He will never again destroy the earth because Hashem enjoys the service of people who have corrupt and evil hearts. Despite their tendency to do wrong, they fight and overcome their *yetzer hara*.

The *Kedushas Levi* adds that this explains the beginning of the *pasuk* (8:21), *וירח ה' את ריח, הניחוח*, "Hashem smelled the pleasant aroma

4. Reb Yehudah of Nasod *zt'l* was once on a train in a private compartment, and an old woman came aboard. Fearing the prohibition of *yichud*, the Rav jumped off the moving train. His students asked him, "Why were you *moser nefesh*? What were you afraid of? She's an old woman!"

He replied, "I wasn't afraid of her. I was afraid of the *aveirah* of *yichud*."

Chassidim would come to The Koznitzer Magid *zt'l* to receive counsel and his *brachos*, but he didn't admit women to his room. Once, when the *gabbai* wasn't around, an elderly woman arrived. Not knowing the court's customs, she entered the Koznitzer Magid's room. The Koznitzer Magid hurried to the window and was ready to jump out. Fortunately, just then, the *gabbai* returned and prevented the Koznitzer Magid from jumping.

Later, the *gabbai* asked, "The woman was old, and you're ill. What were you afraid of? Why did you have to risk your life and jump out of the window?"

The Koznitzer Magid replied, "When the *yetzer hara* takes control, he can make an old woman appear young and a sick person healthy."

The Slonimer chassid, Reb Mordechai (Motke) Leider *zt'l* of Teveria, was once very ill as a young man; people thought he would die. After his miraculous recovery, he came to the Slonimer beis medresh in Teveria. He announced, "Yesterday, I almost did the *kuntz*" (trick, implying that he almost died and went up to heaven. He was implying that this would have been better for him because then he wouldn't have the tests of this world).

Another Slonimer chassid, Reb Elazar Katz *zt'l*, replied, "What did you say? That you almost made 'the *kuntz*'? How would you survive up there in heaven without a *לא תתורו* (the *mitzvah* to be cautious with one's eyes)?"

[of the *korbanos*]." The Baal HaTurim writes that the expression וירח את ריח appears only twice in Tanach. Once in *pasuk* (8:21) and the other in (*Bereishis* 27:27), וירח את ריח בגדיו, which can be translated, "He smelled the scent of rebellion." It is the rebellious nature of his heart that creates ריח ניהוח, Hashem's pleasure. Hashem has immense pleasure when a Yid doesn't follow the dictates of his rebellious heart and instead serves Hashem.

Consider the following mashal (the Baal HaTanya tells a similar mashal in *Torah Or, Vayishlach* (ד"ה והנה הקרבנות):

A wealthy, powerful king had many musicians and singers. They would play and sing before him, and the king had much pleasure from them. But mostly, the king would listen to his pet bird, which was trained to sing. Some birds, by nature, can whistle a few notes, but this bird was able to carry a tune and sing actual songs.

Once, one of the professional singers complained to the king, "I sing nicer than your bird. Why do you prefer the bird's singing over mine?"

The king replied, "You sing beautifully, that is true, but many people sing well. But a singing bird is a novelty. This is the only bird in the world that can sing. That's why I prefer listening to the bird's singing over the best singers and musicians."

This explains why Hashem loves our service more than the *avodah* of the *malachim* in heaven. *Malachim* sing better than us, and they serve Hashem with more fear, love, and perfection than we can, but *malachim* don't struggle. They don't have a *yetzer hara*, and they aren't tested. Therefore, there is nothing special about their service. Hashem prefers to listen to the singing and the service of the Jewish nation, human beings made of dust, people who struggle with the *yetzer hara* because, despite their many hardships, they serve Hashem.

Someone told the Chazon Ish *zt'l* about a very special *bachur*, who was a *masmid*, a *talmid chacham*, and had sterling *middos*. He

added to the Chazon Ish, "It seems like he doesn't even have a *yetzer hara*." The Chazon Ish replied, "Then he is a *baal mum* (flawed)." Because, as a rule, a person should have a *yetzer hara*. That's what makes his *avodas Hashem* precious to Hashem.

Someone complained to Rebbe Mendel of Vitebsk *zt'l* about his many tests. When he succeeds in passing one difficulty, he is confronted with another.

The Rebbe explained to him that each time he passes a test, he creates, *keviyachol*, a garment for Hashem. People don't like to wear the same clothing every day, and *keviyachol*, Hashem also wants new clothing. Therefore, one is confronted daily with new tests. Each test creates a new garment for Hashem.

It states (8:11), והנה עלה זית טרף בפיהו, "Behold - an olive leaf it had plucked with its mouth." Rashi writes that the dove was saying to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "May my *parnassah* be bitter like an olive, but from Hashem, rather than sweet like honey from the hands of man." The Beis Avraham *zt'l* explains from these words contain a lesson for us: Better a small service (represented by the small olive leaf in the dove's beak) that is bitter due to hard tests, than great accomplishments that come easily and are sweet like honey.

It states (6:20), שנים מכל יבואו אליך להחיות, "Two of each [species] shall come to you to keep alive." The Ramban writes that יבואו, "shall come," indicates that they came on their own. Noach didn't need to search for the animals. He writes, "They came to Noach in sets of two on their own. Noach didn't have to climb mountains or go to islands to hunt them. But for the animals that came in groups of seven, the *pasuk* doesn't state that they will come on their own. Noach had to search for those animals to bring into the *teivah*."

The reason for this differentiation is discussed in *Ramban* (7:8-9). He writes, "Hashem didn't obligate Noach to search for the animals that came [in sets of two] for the

survival of their species, but those who came [in groups of seven, so Noach could sacrifice them] it was the opposite because it is proper to toil in mitzvos." Avodas Hashem should be challenging, tests should be struggles; that is how it was meant to be. That is what grants us *chen* before Hashem.⁵

The Chozeh of Lublin *zt'l* says that if a person finds his *avodas Hashem* simple and easy, without struggles and tests, that's a sign that he hasn't embraced the yoke of Heaven and hasn't yet begun *avodas Hashem*. A person can get into the habit of davening each day and going to a *Torah shiur*, and when this becomes routine, it isn't all that hard, but *avodas Hashem* doesn't end there. He should ask himself, "Do I daven with *kavanah*? Do I invest enough effort to understand what I'm learning? And how are my *middos* and my *emunah*?" There is much work to do. *Avodas Hashem* isn't easy. If he thinks *avodas Hashem* is easy, it is because he is satisfied with the routine he attained and isn't trying to go higher.

Chesed

It states (*Tehillim* 121:5) ה' צלך, "Hashem is your shadow." The Baal Shem Tov explains

that just like a shadow mimics all the movements of a person, so too does Hashem copy what we do. If people act kindly to one another, Hashem will bestow kindness on them. If people forgive their fellow man, Hashem will forgive them, and so on.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (ד"ה נח איש) teaches that if Noach's generation had done *chesed* with one another, Hashem would have acted kindly with them, and they wouldn't have been punished in the flood. But the people of that generation stole, were self-centered and cruel, and this brought on the big flood in which they all drowned.

It states (6:12), וירא אלקים... כי השחית כל בשר את, דרכו על הארץ, "Hashem saw...that each person corrupted his way on earth..." The Chasam Sofer says that *דרכו* refers to Hashem's way. It is Hashem's way to act with compassion and kindness - indeed, Hashem is called רחום וחנון because of His kind, benevolent ways - but the people of that generation were cruel to one another, and *keviyachol*, Hashem was unable to act with compassion and kindness. השחית דרכו, they ruined His way.

Outstandingly, Noach wasn't influenced by the cruelty that surrounded him. He

5. When one recognizes the extent of his struggles and the power of his yetzer hara, he won't be disheartened by his ups and downs, days when he serves Hashem better, and days when he fails, *r'l*. It is a battle, and a battle has casualties. The main thing is to keep battling, and you will succeed in the end.

A father asked his son to get out of the car to check if the blinkers were working. The son said, "They're working. They're not working. They're working. They're not working."

The father explained to the son that this means they work. Similarly, when it comes to *avodas Hashem*, we expect ups and downs. When everything is smooth and straightforward, something is wrong. This isn't how *avodas Hashem* works.

Someone asked a *rosh yeshiva*, "My son learns in your yeshiva. How is he doing? Does he study well?"

The *rosh yeshiva* replied, "I don't know what to say. There are days when he studies well, but there are times when he doesn't..."

The father smiled broadly and said, "That's what I was hoping to hear."

The *rosh yeshiva* was startled; why would the father be happy that his son isn't always studying well. The father explained, "I'm a cardiologist, and I often watch the lines on a cardiograph machine. When the lines go up and down, I know the patient is alive. When there's a straight line, I know the patient is dead. So, for me, ups and downs are a sign of life."

remained a pillar and beacon of kindness in a corruption-filled world. The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 30:8) says that the word נח means kind and pleasant because Noach was נח לעליונים ונה לתחתונים, pleasant to heaven and pleasant to people. He was kind and compassionate to everyone, and therefore Hashem dealt compassionately with him and saved him from the flood.⁶

Let us elaborate on the principle that when you do kindness to others, Hashem will do kindness to you.

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 33:2) says that there was a drought in the days of Reb Tanchuma. The people asked him to decree a fast day, so he did. They fasted Monday, Thursday, and then on Monday again (as this is what is done when there are fasts for a drought). It was during the second Monday, with no rain having fallen yet, that Reb Tanchuma cried before the public, "Yidden! My children! Have *rachmanus* on one another, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will have *rachmanus* on you."

The Midrash continues to describe, in length, how one person had compassion for his fellow man and gave tzedakah. Reb Tanchuma raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Master of the world! This man had compassion... You are (*Tehillim* 145:8) חנון ורחום, kind and compassionate, and we are the children of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, whom You love. You shall certainly have

compassion on us." Immediately after this prayer, it began to rain.

In Eretz Yisrael, we begin davening for rain, saying ותן טל ומטר, from the 7th of Cheshvan. We would start davening for rain earlier, however, when the Beis HaMikdash stood, Yidden traveled to Yerushalayim to be *olah l'regel*, and those who lived far from Yerushalayim only arrived home by the 7th of Cheshvan. Since those Yidden, walking home, didn't want to get stuck and trek through the mud in rainy weather, we wait until the 7th of Cheshvan, when all Yidden are back home.

The question is: Why is this halachah kept even in our times? Due to our *aveiros*, we don't have a Beis HaMikdash, no one is traveling home, so why don't we daven for rain earlier?

Perhaps it is to remind us to have compassion for our fellow man. In the era of the Beis HaMikdash, they didn't say, "Most people are home already. Let's daven for rain." We waited until the last Yid came home, so no one should be forced to walk in the rain. This is a lesson worth remembering for all generations. And when we have compassion, Hashem will have compassion on us and send us rain and *yeshuos*.

The Midrash (*Shochar Tov* 37) says that Avraham Avinu asked Shem ben Noach, "In what merit did you leave the *teivah*?"

6. At the beginning of the *parashah* (6:9) it states, נח איש צדיק תמים, "Noach was a perfect tzaddik," but Hashem said to Noach (7:1), אותך ראיתי צדיק לפני, "I see that you are a tzaddik before me." Hashem didn't call him a tzaddik *tamim*, a perfect tzaddik, just tzaddik. Chazal (quoted in *Rashi*) say that מכאן שאומרים מקצת שבחו של אדם בפניו, "From this we learn that in front of the person we say some of his praise, and [we say] all of his praises when we aren't before him."

מקצת שבחו means "a portion of his praises." It seems it should state מוחצית שבחו, half of the praises, because at the beginning of the *parashah* Noach is described in two words, צדיק תמים, and Hashem told Noach one word צדיק. So, Hashem told Noach fifty percent of Noach's praise, and we should learn from this that one says to a person fifty percent of his praise.

The Mekor Baruch *zt'l* answers that there are actually three words expressing Noach's praises at the beginning of the *parashah*. It states, איש צדיק תמים, and איש is also a praise. איש means a person with sterling *middos*, is kind to others and knows how to get along with others. So, when Hashem told Noach that he is a tzaddik, that is indeed מקצת שבחו, only a portion of his praise.

Shem replied, "It was in the merit of tzedakah, which we performed in the *teivah*."

Avraham asked, "What tzedakah did you do? There weren't poor people in the *teivah*! It was only Noach and his children!"

Shem replied, "We did tzedakah with the animals, with the beasts, and with the birds. We fed the animals all night and didn't have time to sleep."

When Avraham heard the reward for feeding animals, Avraham said, "They left the *teivah* in the merit of tzedakah. I will do *chesed* with mankind, and my reward will be far greater!" This is when Avraham pitched his *Eshel* and began his *hachmasas orchim* program.

The Midrash (*Tanchuma* 5) says, "Two people are called tzaddik [in Tanach], and they earned this title because they sustained others with food. They are Noach and Yosef. Noach is called tzaddik because he fed the animals, and Yosef is referred to as tzaddik (see *Amos* 2:6) because Yosef supported his family (see *Bereishis* 47:12, ויכלל יוסף)."

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 36:3) states, "Moshe is more beloved than Noach. Moshe was first called (*Shemos* 2:19), איש מצרי (Egyptian man), and later he became (*Devarim* 33:1), איש אלקים (a man of G-d). Noach was first called (6:9), איש צדיק (righteous man), and he became (9:22), איש האדמה (man of the earth)." The *Meshech Chachmah* (on 9:22, ויחל נח איש האדמה) explains that there are two paths in serving Hashem. One is to serve Hashem in solitude, by oneself, as if there is only him and the Creator in the world. The other path of *avodas Hashem* is to help others and to be involved in the needs of the community. Noach served Hashem by himself, not wanting to rebuke the nation, and therefore he eventually fell from his levels. He started out as a tzaddik and became איש האדמה. Moshe started out from a lower place, he was called איש מצרי, but he was *moser nefesh* to help Yidden (for example, he killed the Mitzri that beat a Yid), so he rose to the highest levels until he earned the title of איש האלקים.

Reb Elazer Tzaddok Turchin *zt'l* was always a *masmid*, but the following incident raised his knowledge and *hasmadah* in Torah to a very high level.

One *erev* Yom Kippur, he was ready to go early to beis medresh to say *Tefillas Zakkah* and prepare for Yom Kippur. He was rushing to beis medresh when the Tepliker Rav *zt'l* called to him, "*Bachur'!* *Bachur'!* I need some help cleaning my home."

Reb Elazar Tzaddok put aside his desire to be in beis medresh early and made his sole objective to help the elderly Tepliker Rav. When he completed the deed, the Tepliker Rav told him, "I know you had many things to do today, and you helped me with *mesirus nefesh*. Therefore Hashem will certainly help you this year beyond the rules of nature."

After this incident, Reb Elazar Tzaddok Turchin became like a new person. He would learn thirty pages of Gemara a day, in-depth, and he didn't forget anything.

Reb Meir Chadash *zt'l*, the *mashgiach* of Yeshivas Chevron, saw his student, Reb Elazar Tzaddok, finishing one *masechta* after the other, and suspected that he was learning on a very superficial level. He tested him, but Reb Elazar Tzaddok knew everything perfectly. Reb Meir Chadash told him, "You know everything super well. Nevertheless, I still maintain that this isn't the way to study Torah. To learn a *masechta b'iyun*, one needs more than just a few days. (Reb Meir Chadash didn't know the secret; the reason Reb Elazar Tzaddok Turchin's mind was so open for Torah.) Despite Reb Meir Chadash's premonitions, Reb Elazar Tzaddok continued studying in this manner, and he became a great Torah scholar. (He wrote the *sefarim Shoneh Halachos* together with Reb Chaim Kanievsky *zt'l*.) The entire Torah was on his fingertips. Anyone seeking a certain Gemara would go to him, and he would tell them exactly which page and line they sought. Without looking inside, he knew everything written on any given line, from Rashi (which is printed by the innermost column of the Gemara) to the Gemara, to Tosfos,

and then the Rabbeinu Chananel (printed on the outermost margin of the Gemara).

Reb Elazar Tzaddok did a favor for the Tepliker Rav, one *erev* Yom Kippur, but ultimately, he did the greatest favor for himself. He earned so much from this *chesed* for the rest of his life. Because when you do *chesed* to others, Hashem does *chesed* to you.

The world stands in the merit of *chesed*, as it states (Tehillim 89:3) עולם חסד יבנה, "The world will be built with kindness." When one does *chesed*, he becomes a partner with Hashem in creation. A partner in a business has permission to do as he sees fit. So, when one does *chesed* and becomes a partner in creation, he can decree, and Hashem will fulfill his requests.

Someone once came to Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zt'l* on Friday night and asked for a *brachah* for a *yeshuah*. The Rebbe said, "It would have been better had you come before kiddush since that is a more *mesugal* time for *yeshuos*. Chazal say that when one says Kiddush Friday night, he becomes a partner with Hashem in Creation, and a partner has a right to do and decree as he wishes. It is easier at that time to bring salvation."

An *almanah* cried before Rebbe Aharon HaGadol of Karlin *zt'l* that her daughter is a *kallah*, and she needs a lot of money to marry her off. Rebbe Aharon gave her generously.

Sometime later, the *almanah* came to Rebbe Aharon again, and this time she cried that her daughter refused to go to the chuppah until I bought her a *shtern tichel* (which cost a lot of money). "I tell her that her request is ridiculous, but I can't get her to change her mind."

Rebbe Aharon took out a bag of money hidden in a closet and gave it to her.

When the rebbetzin found out what her husband did, she asked, "Why did you give all this money to one woman? We could have distributed the money to twenty poor people, who need food for Shabbos!"

Rebbe Aharon replied, "When I got up to give her the money, that question popped into my mind, too. I thought, 'Why should I give all this money to one *almanah* when I can help many people with this money?' But then I told myself that this money had been hidden in our home for ten years, and I never thought to give it to twenty poor people for Shabbos. Why did I think of it now when I was planning to give the money away to this poor *almanah*? I understood that this thought is from the *yetzer hara*."

Different forms of Tzedakah

Not everyone can give tzedakah. Some poor people can't give much. But there are other forms of tzedakah that they can do.

The *Zohar* says that saying a kind word to your fellow man is also a form of tzedakah. So, if you can't help with money, you can help with kind words.

Another form of *chesed* is to help someone acquire a *parnassah*. This is a wonderful form of tzedakah, as it sets a person up on his feet, so he can manage on his own. And in contrast, it is a grave sin to take away from someone's *parnassah*:

It states in this week's *parashah* (9:6), שופך דם האדם באדם דמו ישפך, "Whoever sheds the blood of man...shall his blood be shed." The Kamarna *zt'l* (*Heichel HaBrachah* 9:5) says the *pasuk* refers to taking away someone's *parnassah*. He writes, "We learn from this *pasuk* how cautious one must be not to take away the *parnassah* of his fellow man because it is literally like murdering him." The punishment for this is very severe, as the *pasuk* indicates.

Reb Yechiel of Alexander *zt'l* would say that it is dangerous to take away someone's *parnassah*. Doing so is to risk one's life.

Once, a chassid tried to take away the *parnassah* of a certain Rav. Reb Yechiel of Alexander called this *chassid* and said, "I received from my Rebbes that when one takes away someone's *parnassah* he is risking

his own life." And then Rebbe Yechiel read with him the *pasuk*, שופך דם באדם דמו ישפך. He read it word by word and had him repeat each word. The chassid promised that he wouldn't attempt anymore to take away the Rav's *parnassah*.

But soon after he returned home, his friends convinced him to continue his *machlokes* against that Rav, and to try to take away his *parnassah*. Immediately after he did something to take away the Rav's *parnassah*, he began to spit up blood, and he continued spitting until he died. It was as Rebbe Yechiel told him: taking away someone's *parnassah* is risking one's life.

In contrast, to help someone earn *parnassah* is a great *chesed* and is be rewarded with a good life and *arichus yamim*.

Another kind of *tzedakah* is to educate and direct people on the right path. Indeed, there is no greater *chesed* (in this world and the next) than to lead someone on the right path.

It states (6:10), ויולד נח שלשה בנים, "Noach had three children." The Seforno writes, "When he began to give *mussar* to his generation, he merited to bear children." When he helped others (by trying to set them on the right path) that's when he merited Hashem's kindness.

We learn from this that in the merit of *tzedakah* and *chesed*, one can beget children.

Rebbe Henoah of Alexander *zt'l* explained that there is a chamber in heaven for bearing children. When one can get to that chamber, he will have his salvation. The problem is that this chamber is sometimes locked. But there is a solution. Near the chamber of children is the chamber for *chesed*, open to those who do good deeds. This chamber is always open, and when one comes inside, he can easily jump over into the chambers of children.

Rebbe Baruch of Zichlin *zt'l* came to Rebbe Henoah of Alexander *zt'l* for Shabbos Parashas Noach, and told the Rebbe that his son-in-law doesn't have children.

Rebbe Henoah told him about the *segulah* of doing *chesed*, to enter from there into the chamber for bearing children. He added that Rashi (6:9) writes, עיקר תולדותיהן של צדיקים מעשים טובים. This can be translated, עיקר תולדותיהן של צדיקים, *tzaddikim* have children, מעשים טובים, in the merit of their *gemilus chasadim*. Their good deeds gain them entry into the chambers of *chesed* and bearing children. Therefore, the next *pasuk* states, ויולד נח שלשה בנים, "Noach gave birth to three children: Shem, Cham, and Yafes," implying that Noach bore those children in the *zechus* of his *chesed*.⁷

7. The Midrash (*Tanchumah, Noach 2*) explains, "When a person leaves the world without children, he is upset, and he cries. Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells him, 'Why do you cry? Is it because you didn't bear offspring? You have produced something better than children.'

"The man asks, 'Ribono Shel Olam, what fruits do I have?'

"Hakadosh Baruch Hu replies, 'The Torah [that you studied], because it states, פרי צדיק עץ חיים, the fruit of the *tzaddik* is the tree of life.' The offspring of man are his good deeds, as it states about Noach, אלה תולדות נח, [Noach's primary children were his good deeds]."

Hashem created mankind with the ability to speak, and certainly the purpose of speech is to help others. The eyes are for himself. His ears are also for himself. But one can't speak unless there is someone to speak to. This means speech is for others, and that's the trait that makes man a man. It states, (2:7) ויהי האדם לנפש חיה and Onkelus translates it, והות באדם לרוח מומלא, "it was in man a speaking spirit." He became an *adam* when he was able to speak.

The Divrei Chaim *zt'l* wrote to his son-in-law, Reb Moshe Ungar, something along these lines: "You sent me the information you heard about the boy that was suggested for your daughter. You told me about his

It states (Tehillim 37:26), כל היום חונן ומלווה וזרעו, לברכה, "All day he is benevolent, and he lends money, and his children are blessed." The Divrei Avraham said that this means that doing *chesed* with others is *mesugal* to be blessed with good children. (The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* praised this *vort* immensely.)

So, *tzedakah* and *chesed* are *mesugal* for bearing children and for bearing good, *erlicher* children.

This is actually found in a Gemara. The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 9:) says, "Whoever is accustomed to giving *tzedakah* will have children who are *baalei chachmah*, *baalei osher*, *baalei agadah* (wise, wealthy, experts in Torah, etc.)."

Tefillah

There are essential lessons in *tefillah* that are found in this week's *parashah*. Hashem told Noach (6:18), ובאת אל התיבה, "And you should enter the *teivah*...." The Magid of Mezritz *zt'l* explained that *תיבה* can be translated as "words" of Torah and *tefillah*. Hashem tells every *Yid*, ובאת אל התיבה, to come into the words of *tefillah* and say them with all your heart and soul. That is the *teivah* that will save you from all your problems.

The Torah urges, צהרתעשה לתיבה, "Illuminate your words." Let every word of your *tefillah* shine.

Hashem's name הוי"ה is used when Hashem bestows His kindness, and the name אלקים is used when Hashem reveals his judgment. We are therefore surprised when it states (8:1), ויזכור אלקים את נח, "Elokim remembered Noach," and the flood ended.

The *pasuk* doesn't state הוי"ה את נח, (Hashem's name for compassion) as we would expect.

Rashi explains, "This name אלקים is *midas hadin* (harsh justice), but it became *rachamim* (compassion) because of the *tefillos* of *tzaddikim*." Noach davened in the *teivah* until even Hashem's attribute of *din* agreed to save Noach and his family.

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* asks, where does it state in the Torah that Noach davened when he was in the *teivah*?

Rebbe Bunim replied that it states (7:23), גונח וכוהה דם מטורח, and Rashi writes, הבהמות והחיות, "Noach was groaning and spitting blood because of the burden [of caring for] the cattle and the beasts." (Chazal say that Noach didn't have time to sleep because he was always busy feeding the animals.) His desperation and broken heart were like a prayer before Hashem. It wasn't a prayer with words but a call from the depths of his heart: "Hashem, save me. I can't manage." Those were Noach's *tefillos* that roused Hashem's compassion and freed him from the *teivah*.⁸

A *segulah* for one's *tefillos* to be answered is to pray for Hashem's honor. When the *tefillah* is for Hashem's honor, then one's *tefillos* will be answered more easily and quickly.

After the nation sinned with the *meraglim*, and Hashem threatened to destroy the nation, Moshe saved them with his *tefillos*. Moshe davened and his *tefillos* included essentially two points: (a) If Hashem destroys

scholarly abilities and his *yichus*, but you left out the main part. You didn't tell me whether he is a *mench*, someone who is kind to others and will be kind to your daughter. And that is a primary point to find out, because it states (*Devarim* 22:16), את בתי נתתי לאיש, "I gave my daughter to an *ish*, to a *mench*." (The Chebiner Rav *zt'l* often repeated this story.)

8. When a poor person comes to the door, we sometimes request to see his *hamlatzah*, his letter from a rav who attests that he is indeed needy. But when a person comes to the door with ripped clothing, he doesn't need to show an approbation to prove that he's poor. The poverty is confirmed by his very appearance. This describes the *tefillah* of a broken heart. Even without words, the circumstance itself is like a loud shout before Hashem.

the nation, it will create a *chillul Hashem* because the nations of the world will think Hashem doesn't have power to bring them into Eretz Yisrael. (b) Moshe prayed that Hashem have compassion on the Jewish nation.

Hashem said, *סלחתי בדברך*, "I forgive them, as you said," and Rashi writes, "Because of what you said that the nations of the world will say that He doesn't have power to bring them into Eretz Yisrael." It was specifically **that** prayer that saved them, and not the prayer that Hashem should have *rachmanus* on them.

The Tchebiner Rav said that it's a mitzvah to publicize this Rashi, so people will know the great power of tefillah, when one pleads for Hashem's honor. Moshe's plea for compassion wasn't accepted, but Moshe's plea that Hashem save them for His honor was accepted.

After *Shemonah Esrei* we say, *עשה למען שמך*, *עשה למען ימינך*, *עשה למען תורתך*, *עשה למען קדושתך*, "Answer us for Your name's sake, for Your right arm, for Your Torah, for Your holiness." The *poskim* (Tur 122) teach that when one says these words *נעשה רעש גדול למעלה*, "It arouses a great commotion in heaven." The *Tur* writes that those who are cautious to say these words, *זוכה ומקבל פני שכינה*, will merit receiving the face of the *Shechinah*."

The Likutei Chaver ben Chaim (*Noach*) explains that after saying *Shemonah Esrei*, we request that Hashem should answer our tefillos *for His honor; for His sake*, and this is considered to be a very special tefillah.

The first letters of *שמך*, *ימינך*, *תורתך*, *קדושתך* (from the tefillah *עשה למען שמך* etc.) spell *קשת*. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Toras Moshe, Noach*, *את קשתי*) would say every year that this is hinted at in the *pasuk* (9:13), *את קשתי נתתי בענן*, "I placed My rainbow (*קשת*) in the cloud."

The Chasam Sofer's student, Likutei Chaver ben Chaim, explains that it states (*Eichah* 3:44) *סכות בענן לך מעבור תפילה*, that after the

churban Beis HaMikdash, Hashem placed a cloud in heaven, which prevents the tefillos from going up. The *pasuk* is hinting, *את קשתי*, that this cloud will be penetrated when one prays in the form of *קשת*, *roshei teivos* for *ימינך*, *תורתך*, *שמך*, *קדושתך*. When one prays for Hashem's honor the tefillos will penetrate the cloud and go up before Hashem's throne.

Chazal (*Bereishis Rabba* 32:6, quoted in *Rashi* 7:7) tell us, *אף נח מקטני אמונה היה, מאמין ואינו מאמין שיבא המבול*, "Also Noach had a low level of *emunah*. He believed and he didn't believe that the *mabul* will come." The *meforshim* struggle to understand this *Rashi*, because how can we say that Noach, the perfect tzaddik, lacked *emunah*?

The Divrei Shmuel *zt'l* writes in the name of the Kedushas Levi *zt'l* that the *pasuk* is telling us that Noach didn't believe *in himself*. He believed in Hashem, but he didn't believe that he can daven and abolish the decree of the flood. The Divrei Shmuel concludes, "When one has this *emunah* [that his tefillos have power in heaven] then he has the power to annul decrees with his tefillah."

The *Mesilas Yesharim* (19) teaches that the hardest part of tefillah is to attain the recognition that you are actually speaking with Hashem because we don't see Hashem, to whom we are speaking. He writes, "When one prays one should think...that he is standing before the King of kings and praying to Him...as Chazal (*Brachos* 28:) state, *וכשאתה מתפלל דע לפני מי אתה מתפלל*, "When you pray, know before Whom you are standing... Know that you are literally standing before the Creator, and you are speaking with Him, although no eye can see Him. Someone with a straight mind, and with a drop of contemplation, can plant this truth into his heart, that he is literally speaking with Hashem, begging from Him, and Hashem harkens his words, as when one is speaking to his friend."⁹

9. A non-religious Yid walked into the yeshiva in Kfar Chassidim as they were davening *Minchah*. He said

The Chareidim writes, *אני והו' הושיעה נא*. This means that when it's *אני והו'*, only me and Hashem, for it is true that I am alone with Hashem. Even when I am among other people, I am still alone, since no one sees the secrets of my heart other than Hashem, and no one is seeking to help me other than Hashem, and no one can save me from my *tzaros* other than Hashem. As it states (*Malachim 17:1*) *הי ה' אשר עמדתי לפניו*, 'I swear to Hashem Whom I stood before Him.' And it states (*Bereishis 17:1*) *התהלך לפני והיה תמים*, 'Go before Me...' This is the implication of *אני והו'*, there is only me and Hashem, *הושיע נא*, and when one davens with this awareness, this will bring salvations."

When we daven, we should pray for all our needs, the big and the small. Once, after *Shemonah Esrei*, chassidim heard Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* say, "May it be Your will that the maid should return." His students thought that he certainly had lofty intentions with this tefillah, but he explained that there were no special secrets concealed in his words. "My wife is old, she needs help, but our maid left. So, I prayed that the maid should return" (written in *Divrei Shmuel*).

Last week's *parashah* states, *ויהי האדם לנפש* ויהי, "Adam was a living soul" (*Bereishis 2:7*). Onkelus translates it as, *לנפש מומללא*, "a speaking soul." This means that man's essence is his ability to speak. But when Adam was created, he was alone. Even Chavah wasn't created yet. There was no one to talk to. It must be that man was created to speak with Hashem. The purpose of man's creation is to pour out one's heart in tefillah.

Cheshvan

The Chida (*Moreh b'Etzba 298*) writes, "After *yom tov*, in the month of Cheshvan, be strong with your *yiras Shamayim* and with studying Torah *l'shmah*, because it is the beginning of

the year and this will be a good sign for the entire year. After all, Cheshvan is close to the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, and one must demonstrate that his *teshuvah* was sincere, and it wasn't just a show, *chas v'shalom*. Therefore, make a good *siman* for the entire year. Run like a warrior to study Torah and to perform mitzvos."

This month is called Mar Cheshvan. The Gemara (*Megillah 27:*) says that if a person is davening and he needs to go to the bathroom, he must wait (the time it takes to walk) four *amos* before he relieves himself. The Gemara explains that he may not relieve himself immediately after he completes his tefillah because *מרחשן שפוותיה*, his lips are still moving. After one finishes the tefillah, his heart and *kavanah* are still on the tefillah, and it is like his lips are still moving, so it isn't proper to relieve oneself at this time since it would be disrespectful for the tefillah. After a few seconds pass, he can relieve himself.

The Ruzhiner said that *מרחשון* has the same letters as *מר חשון*. This hints that in Cheshvan, our lips are still moving and are inspired by the tefillos and the mitzvos we performed in the previous month of Tishrei.

The Imrei Chaim *zt'l* compared it to a rolling tire. The tire continues to roll, even after one lets go of it. Similarly, we just went through a month of tefillos, *teshuvah*, and requests. Our mouths were accustomed to moving and praying, and even after we stopped, the momentum continues. This is the unique reality of Cheshvan. The influence of the holidays is still with us, and we should allow the momentum to continue.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* describes the uniqueness of Mar Cheshvan from the *pasuk* (*Tehillim 45:2*), *רחש לבי דבר טוב*, which indicates that in this month, the hearts of the Jewish nation are inspired to perform good deeds before Hashem.

about that time, "I saw *bachurim* swaying back and forth, but there was an old man standing near the wall [Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l*] and it appeared that he was truly speaking to someone..."

The Maor v'Shamesh (*Shemini* ד"ה אל) says that this month "is *mesugal* to understand Torah, more than all other months."

Cheshvan is also a time to review the *kabbalos* we made for the new year and to try and keep them. It is so easy to forget everything we took upon ourselves since it is human nature to revert to our old routines. Cheshvan is a good time to seek to keep the commitments of *teshuvah* going.¹⁰

It states (9:13), את קשתי נתתי בענן והיתה לאות ברית, בני ובין הארץ, "My rainbow I have placed in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Myself and the earth." This means that Hashem designated the rainbow as a sign to remind Him that He won't bring another *mabul* to the world. It seems strange that Hashem needs a reminder. Doesn't Hashem remember everything?

Rather, we can explain that the rainbow is a sign and a reminder *for us*. It tells us that we should also make signs to remind us to maintain the boundaries and *kabbalos* we took for ourselves for the new year.

The *teivah* had three floors. *Rashi* (7:16, and Sanhedrin 108:) explains that each floor served its own purpose. עליונים לאדם, אמצעים למדור, תחתיים ליבל, "The top floor was for man, the middle floor was for the animals, and the bottom floor was for garbage."

We can ask: Why did Noach and his family need to have their own floor? Chazal (*Tanchuma* 9) tell us that Noach and his family were busy 24/7 tending to the animals. They were probably hardly ever in their living quarters.

We can answer that the top floor was their sign and reminder that they weren't lowly animals. They needed this reminder not to think that they, too, are like animals mistakenly.

Similarly, we must make signs to remind us of the matters that are important to us so we don't forget what we need to do.

Perhaps a practical example of this principle is to write down the *kabbalos* you made during the *yomim tovim* and to read the list from time to time. This can be your sign and reminder of what you want to do.

The Chofetz Chaim writes in the introduction of his *sefer* that just having this *sefer* in your bookcase can help you remember to avoid speaking *lashon hara*. An entire *sefer* about *lashon hara* reminds us of its importance. The *sefer Orach Apayim* on anger writes in his introduction that owning an entire *sefer* on anger is a reminder that we must be cautious of anger.

In closing, there are reminders and techniques that can help us maintain our *kabbalos*, and Cheshvan is a good time to implement these ideas.

10. *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 264:9) states, "One doesn't need to singe the wick [which will be used for the Shabbos candles]. Nevertheless, the custom is to light the wick and to blow it out, so it will be singed, and the fire will catch well."

We add that lighting extinguished wicks hints that when you fall, and your inspiration cools off, it is time to relight yourself and try again. The fire you experienced on yom tov may have cooled off, so now it's time to rekindle yourself and begin anew.