

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Terumah



Torah WELLSPRINGS

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Torah Wellsprings - Terumah

Better Days Are Coming

Chazal say משוננס אדר מרבין בשמחה "When Adar arrives, we should be very happy". The holy Ruzhiner *zt'l* teaches that one way to be in a state of happiness is to believe that Hashem will help us right away. Whatever a person is going through, he believes that salvation is just around the corner, and soon everything will become better. Hashem says (Tehillim 91:15) עִמּוֹ אֲנִי בְּצָרָה "I am with him in distress." Hashem suffers our pain together with us. Hashem is the בעל רחמים, and He will certainly have compassion on us.

It states (25:3, 5) וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֹתָם זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנִחְשֵׁת... וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים "This is the donation that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and copper... and the woods of *Shitim*."

Rashi asks: From where did they have עֵצֵי שִׁטִּים in the desert? Reb Tanchuma explains that Yaakov Avinu saw with his *ruach hakodesh* that the Yidden would build a Mishkan in the desert, so he brought ארזים, cedar wood to Mitzrayim, and he planted them there. He told his children that when they leave Mitzrayim, they should take the wood along with them.

Why was Yaakov Avinu concerned specifically about the עֵצֵי שִׁטִּים in the desert? The other items that were needed for the Mishkan weren't available in the desert either. For example, they needed precious gems for the *eifod*, and they needed the skins of a תחש to build the Mishkan. Hashem supplied them with their needs in the desert

when they needed them. The Gemara (Yoma 75a) says that the gems fell with the manna, and Hashem created the תחש animal for that short period of time, and they were able to build the Mishkan. Just as Hashem provided the gems and the skins of the תחשים, Hashem could have provided the עֵצֵי שִׁטִּים, as well. Why did Yaakov see it necessary to plant them so that they would have them in the desert?

Tzaddikim (Vayechi Yosef, Terumah, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe *zt'l*) answer that Yaakov Avinu planted the עֵצֵי שִׁטִּים in Mitzrayim to give hope to the Jewish nation. While in Mitzrayim, they noticed the עֵצֵי שִׁטִּים, and it reminded them that one day, Hashem will free them, and they will build a Mishkan with these woods.¹

The redemption from Mitzrayim is the root of all other redemptions. Therefore, in our present exile, we must also remember that we won't be in galus forever. The time will come when we will be redeemed.

This also applies to a person's personal galus, each person with his own *pekel*. He must know that the tzaros won't continue forever. Better times will come. This awareness helps people have the strength to endure the hardships that they go through.

Tikunei Zohar (13a) says that three matters resemble one another. Whatever is in one of them is in all three. They include Creation, the Mishkan, and every Yid. The Divrei Yisrael (ד"ה ועורות תחשים) explains that there were

1. The עֵצֵי שִׁטִּים also gave chizuk to the children. The children in Mitzrayim would ask their parents, "What is the story of these trees?" The parents would tell them, "Our forefather Yaakov Avinu planted them here, and he instructed us to take it with us when we leave Mitzrayim."

The children would ask, "Are we really going to leave Mitzrayim one day?"

The parents would reply, "Of course! Hashem will redeem us, and we will build a Mishkan using these trees, to serve Hashem." In this manner, the Yidden would be trained in emunah, with hope and chizuk. It helped them survive the hardships they endured in Mitzrayim.

gold and silver in the Mishkan, and there is gold and silver in every Yid. Silver represents love, and gold represents fear, and these traits are in every Yid, for he loves and he fears Hashem. Similarly, everything that was in the Mishkan, in some way, is in every Yid.

However, the Divrei Yisrael writes that he sought to understand how there is a תחש (the animal whose skins were used to cover the Mishkan) in every Yid. He answers that Rashi (25:5) writes, "The tachash is an animal, and it was only לשעה, for a short time. It had many colors. This is the reason Targum Onkelos calls it סְסִגוּנָא, for it was שֵׁשׁ, happy and proud of its colors." סְסִגוּנָא is comprised of two words: סס, which is like שֵׁשׁ, happy. And גוּנָא means colors (in Aramaic). This describes that this animal was proud of its colors.

גוּנָא can also mean "ways". Divrei Yisroel explains that the Jewish nation is happy with the way Hashem leads them because they know that it is for the good.

Rashi adds, ולא היתה אלא לשעה. Literally, this means that the tachash only existed for a short time. It was created so the Yidden could build a Mishkan, and then it became extinct. But we can also say that there is a hinted message in Rashi's words, ולא היתה אלא לשעה. It means that a person should accept the שעה, the time and situation that Hashem gives him, no matter what it is.

As it states (Avos 4:1) איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו, who is wealthy? Someone who is happy with his portion." Rashi writes בחלקו means "בחלק", the portion Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave him, whether it is good or bad, whether a lot or a little. He accepts everything with a good eye."²

This person isn't דוחק את השעה, trying and waiting for the times to change. He is happy with the time as it is now.

With these ideas in mind, a person can be happy in this month of Adar, the month when it is extra important to be *b'simcha*. Sadness is when one lacks emunah and doesn't believe that everything is for the good. Emunah is the root of being happy, as the Sfas Emes (Succos 5645) writes, אין שמחה ב' כשמחת הבוטח בה', "No joy compares to the joy of trusting in Hashem."

Similarly, the Divrei Yisrael explains the pasuk (Tehillim 19:9) פְּקוּדֵי ה' יִשְׁרִים מְשֻׁמְחֵי לֵב, "The mitzvos of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart."

The Divrei Yisrael explains that פְּקוּדֵי means lacking, חסרון. (As in Bamidbar 31:49, ולא נפקד, מִקֵּנוֹ אִישׁ, "not a man of us is missing.")

The pasuk is saying פְּקוּדֵי ה', a person must believe that what he lacks is from Hashem, and Hashem's ways are always יִשְׁרִים, straight and good. These thoughts are מְשֻׁמְחֵי לֵב; they bring joy to people's hearts.

Therefore, Chazal's lesson, that we be happy in Adar, is for every Yid, no matter what he is going through. How can he be happy if he is going through very hard times? Remember this lesson. Remember that everything is from Hashem, Who loves us and only bestows kindness on us. Remember that Hashem is leading us in the very best way, and remember that the situation will pass, it is only לשעה, and then everything will become good again. Remember all of this, and it is possible to be happy in Adar and throughout the year.³

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

3. It states in parashas Mishpatim (23:25) וְהִסְרֹתִי מִתְּלַח מִקֶּרְבְּךָ, "I shall remove illness from your midst." The Ksav Sofer writes that this refers to the illness of not being content with one's lot.

A foolish man planted his field and watered it generously. The crop grew well, earning him a large profit

The Malbim, in his commentary on the pasuk (Tehillim 130:6) נִפְשִׁי לַאֲדֹנָי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבָקָר שְׁמָרִים לְבָקָר, discusses various types of hopes and bitachon people have, and the differences between them. One form of trust is when one trusts a human being to help him. This is a popular form of trust. Many rely on other people to help them, but not in a way that he is totally calm and certain. As we know, people aren't reliable. One day, they say they will help, the next day they change their mind, or they aren't able to help, and so on.

A second kind of trust is when it is nighttime, and a person is waiting for the morning to come. He trusts and feels confident that the morning will indeed come. He is obviously very confident and sure because morning has come every day for the past 5786 years, and we are almost certain that tomorrow will be the same.

However, the Malbim says, the highest level of trust is to trust in Hashem. That trust is greater than our trust in humans, and even greater than our trust that the morning will certainly come.

This is the meaning of the words, נִפְשִׁי לַאֲדֹנָי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבָקָר. The letter *mem* means greater and more than. It can be translated as follows: נִפְשִׁי לַאֲדֹנָי, my trust that Hashem will help me, מִשְׁמָרִים לְבָקָר, is greater than my trust that the morning will come.

"I Will Dwell Among Them"

It states (25:8) וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם, "They shall make a Mishkan for me, so that I may dwell among them." The Alshich Hakadosh asks why the Torah writes וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם, "I will dwell among them," in the plural tense? The Mishkan is one building, it should state וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכוֹ, "I will dwell in it." The Alshich HaKadosh answers that וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם, "I will dwell in them," means that Hashem will dwell "in them – in Klal Yisrael". Every Yid has the potential to be the abode for the Shechinah, and this is a great merit. How does one merit this?

There is another place that Chazal discuss being an abode for the Shechinah. It is in the Gemara (Shabbos 12), which states that the Shechinah resides above the head of the ill. What is special about the ill, that they become an abode for the Shechinah?⁴

The *sefarim* explain that an ill person is reliant entirely on Hashem because he knows that no one can help him other than Hashem. When Hashem sees his high level of bitachon, Hashem comes and resides with him and helps him. Similarly, every person, whether he is wealthy or poor, when he attains awareness that he is entirely dependent on Hashem, Hashem will reside with him.

The *sefarim* explain that this is מדה כנגד מדה. All his thoughts and hopes are that Hashem should help him. He "lives" with Hashem, and *middah kneged middah*, Hashem will reside with him.

that year. The following year, he decided to double the amount of water in the field. He figured that doing so would double his yield and his profits. Naturally, the seeds rotted, and the entire crop failed.

The *nimshal* is that bounty has a limit, and when it goes over the limit, it doesn't do good. This explains why some people have less money, less success, etc., than others. Sometimes, people complain and ask, "Why can't I be like this one, or that one, who has more than I?" But Hashem knows the amount each person needs. If He would give you more than what you receive, it would cause more harm than good. Trust that Hashem is leading you in the best way and be happy with your lot.

4. The simple explanation of the Gemara is that Hashem has *rachmanus* on those who are sick, and is present above the ill person's head, to help him. This is a reminder for those who are experiencing hardship that Hashem is with them to support them.

In contrast, when one trusts in himself and in his abilities, and he doesn't realize that everything is from Hashem, he won't merit that the Shechinah will reside with him.

The concept of becoming a dwelling place for the Shechinah is especially relevant in Adar, because the sefarim teach that אדר stands for א - דר, the Alef is the Aluf of the World. He is דר, dwells, in this world.

The Maor Einayim teaches that this is the special joy of Adar. Hashem dwells with us, and that is the greatest joy.⁵

The Chidushei HaRim zt'l says that this is the reason we read parashas Terumah during Adar. The month is called א-דר, because Hashem is דר, dwells with us, and this is discussed in the parashah, ועשו לי מקדש, and we should turn ourselves into an abode where the Shechinah will reside.⁶

The Malbim writes, "On the day the Mikdash was set up below, the Mikdash in Heaven was built together with it. From then, Hashem's bounty comes to the world, according to the avodah and the kedushah that happen in the Mikdash below. Hashem commanded וְכָל תַּעֲשׂוּ, that everyone should build a Mikdash in the courtrooms of his

5. Chazal teach us that משכנם אדר מרבין בשמחה, that we should increase our happiness when the month of Adar arrives. The Meor Einayim wonders what the point of increasing happiness during the entire month of Adar is. The miracle of Purim occurred on two days, on the 14th and the 15th of Adar. So, it should be sufficient to be happy then. He answers that אדר means א - דר, the Alef is the Aluf of the World, dwells within this world. This is particularly felt during the month of Adar, and therefore, it is appropriate to rejoice the entire month.

6. It states (25:8) וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנֹתִי בְתוֹכָם. Chazal (Yalkut and Vayikra Rabba 12) say "Whenever it states לִי, it is forever. The problem is that the Mishkan did not stand forever! In our generation, for example, there is no Mishkan nor a Beis HaMikdash. The sefarim answer (and as was taught by Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz zt'l) in accordance with the following Midrash (Shemos Rabba 33:1): "Does it ever happen that someone sells something and the seller is sold together with the item? Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to Yisrael, 'I sold you My Torah, and I am sold together with it, as it states (25:2) וְיָקַחְתָּ לִּי תְרוּמָה, "Take for Me a donation." These words could have been written without the word לִי. It could have stated וְיָקַחְתָּ תְרוּמָה, "Take a donation." However, as it is written, it means, "Take Me, together with the תְרוּמָה." The Midrash explains that the תְרוּמָה in this pasuk alludes to the Torah, which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation. Hashem says וְיָקַחְתָּ לִּי תְרוּמָה, when you take the Torah, you take Me, too.

The Midrash adds: It can be compared to a king who had an only daughter. A foreign king arrived and married the princess. After the wedding, the husband wanted to return with his wife to his homeland. The father said, 'The daughter that I gave you for marriage is my only daughter. I cannot be separated from her. I also cannot tell you not to take her, because she is your wife. So, do me this favor. Wherever you go, make a room for me so that I can live near you, because I am unable to depart from my daughter.' Similarly, Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to Yisrael, 'I gave you my Torah, and I can't depart from her. To ask you not to take her, I also cannot. Rather, שְׂאֵדוֹר בְּתוֹכוֹ עָשׂוּ לִי שְׂאֵדוֹר בְּתוֹכוֹ, wherever you go, make Me a house that I can live in."

This is the reason it states וְיָקַחְתָּ לִּי תְרוּמָה, Hashem requests that together with the Torah, take Me, as well. I don't want to depart from the Torah.

It states (25:9) כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר אֶנִּי מְרַאֶה אוֹתְךָ אֶת תְּבִנֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת תְּבִנֹת כָּל כֵּלָיו וְכֵן תַּעֲשׂוּ, "Like everything that I show you, the form of the Mishkan and the form of all its utensils, and so shall you do."

On the final words, וְכָל תַּעֲשׂוּ Rashi writes, לדורות, "for all generations". The physical Mishkan wasn't for all generations, but the concept of the Mishkan lives on in all generations. A person can build a Mishkan in his heart. He can become a place where the Shechinah resides.

heart. He should prepare himself to be a Mikdash for Hashem, a place where the Shechinah resides. As it states (Shmuel 2, 7:11) 'וְהָגִיד לְךָ ה' בֵּית יַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ ה', 'Hashem has told you that Hashem will make you a house.' This means, you yourself shall become a house for Hashem. This is because Dovid was the fourth leg of the Merkavah (Hashem's divine chariot), and this aspect can be realized in all generations. People build a Mikdash in the corridors of their hearts, and they prepare a mizbeiach to sacrifice their entire soul for Hashem, and to be *moser nefesh* for Hashem's honor at all times, as Avraham said (Bereishis 18:27) 'וָאֲנִי עֹפֵר וָאֶפֶר', 'I am earth and ashes.' He considered himself to be a korban olah for Hashem, and his ashes were gathered on the mizbeiach of his broken, humbled heart before Hashem."

Noam Elimelech (Vayeshev) writes, "I heard a sweet mashal from the mouth of Admor, the Magid of Ravni (the Magid of Mezritch) zt'l. He said that we see that now, in this bitter galus, we see people who are more easily able to attain ruach hakodesh than in the days of the nevi'im. The nevi'im needed a lot of *hisbodidus* to attain *nevuah* and *ruach hakodesh*. He explained this with a wonderful and sweet *mashal*: When a king is in his palace, and a friend comes to invite the king to eat a meal in his home, the king will certainly be angry. It isn't an honor for the king to leave his palace to go to someone's home, even if there will be a very large *seudah* prepared for him. The only way to invite the king to one's home is after one made all the preparations, and then he goes to very high-ranking officials (מלצים ופרקלטים גדולים), who speak and persuade the king to accept the invitation.

"However, when the king is travelling and needs a place to sleep on the side of the road, if he finds a clean room in a clean hotel – even if the hotel is in a village, the king will want to sleep there. The *nimshal* is self-understood. When the Beis HaMikdash stood, and the Shechinah resided in the Kodesh Kadoshim, if a person wanted to draw ruach hakodesh or *nevuah*, he would have to work very hard to attain it. But now

in this bitter galus, the Shechinah is in galus with us, and due to our many sins, the Shechinah doesn't have a place to reside (נע ונד). The Shechinah immensely desires a place to dwell. If the Shechinah finds a clean place to dwell, within a person who is clean from aveiros, that is where the Shechinah will reside!"

We learn from his holy words that in our times, if a person purifies himself from aveiros, he can reach very high levels. He can merit madreigos of ruach hakadosh and be a place where the Shechinah resides!

It states (Yeshayah 33:15-16) וְעֵצָם עֵינָיו מִרְאוֹת בָּרָע, "One who... shuts his eyes from seeing evil, he shall dwell in heights, in rocky fortresses is his stronghold..."

The Targum translates the words מִצְדוֹת מְשֻׁגְבוֹ as follows: יְהֵא בֵית מְשֻׁרְהֵי בֵית מִקְדָּשָׁא. This means that he and his home will be a Beis HaMikdash. This is literal! He attains this level because he is cautious with his eyes.

In the desert, the holy abode is called Mishkan, and when it was built in Yerushalayim, it is called Mikdash, or "Beis HaMikdash". Yet, in this week's parashah, while referring to the Mishkan, it states (25:8) וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכָם, The Torah calls the Mishkan a Mikdash!

Shach (al HaTorah, from the Arizal's students) explains that the pasuk states מִקְדָּשׁ here to hint that a person should make himself holy (שָׁדֵשׁ means holy). If one does so, וְשָׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכָם, the Shechinah will reside on him.

Therefore, two types of Mishkans were built in the desert. One is a Mishkan where the korbanos were brought. The other is the Mishkan within the hearts of the Yidden who sanctified and purified themselves, until they were worthy to host the Shechinah. The Shach (al HaTorah) explains that this is the reason two expressions are used in this week's parashah. בְּנוּ תַעֲשׂוּ and וְעָשׂוּ. This is because two types of Mishkans were built.

One is the Mishkan of the Yid, the other is the Mishkan built in the desert.

Each of the keilim of the Mishkan represents a limb or an attribute of the human being. The *aron* represents the heart, and the two *keruvim* above the aron represent the eyes. וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכָם, sanctify all these limbs, and Hashem will reside with you.

In particular, guarding the eyes will turn you into a Mishkan. It states (25:18) וַעֲשִׂיתָ שְׁנַיִם כְּרֻבִּים זָהָב, "You shall make two keruvim". They were placed above the aron. We also find keruvim in (Bereishis 3:24) וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקְדָּשׁ לְגַן עֵדֶן אֶת הַכְּרֻבִּים וְאֵת לֵהט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לְשֹׁמֵר, "and having driven Adam, He stationed at the east of the Gan Eden the keruvim and the flame of the ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the Tree of Life."

Rashi writes that the *keruvim* were מלאכי חבלה, damaging angels. Were the כְּרֻבִּים holy and part of the Kodesh Kadoshim, or do they represent מלאכי חבלה?

א ווייס explains that the two keruvim represent the two eyes, as stated in Tikunei Zohar (18b). When the eyes are in the Holy of Holies, behind the protection of the *paroches* (curtain), they are Kodesh Kadoshim, holy eyes. But when the eyes are outside of Gan Eden, like on the street, looking all around, then they are מלאכי חבלה.

There is another place that כְּרֻבִּים are mentioned in this week's parashah. It states (26:1) וְאֵת הַמִּשְׁכָּן תַּעֲשֶׂה עֹשֶׂר יְרִיעֵת שֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר וְתִכְלֶלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן

וְתִלְעֵת שְׁנֵי כְּרֻבִּים מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם, "You shall make the Mishkan of ten curtains – twisted linen with turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool – with a woven design of the *keruvim* shall you make them." This time, the כְּרֻבִּים represent the designs that were on the sheets that covered the Mishkan. שְׁנֵי כְּרֻבִּים מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב, they had two designs on them. Rashi writes, פֶּרֶצוֹף אֶחָד מִכָּאן וּפֶרֶצוֹף אֶחָד מִכָּאן, אֵרִי מִצַּד זֶה וְנֹשֶׁר מִצַּד זֶה, "One side had the picture of a אֵרִי, lion, and the other had a picture of a נֹשֶׁר, eagle." Tzaddikim (see א ווייס, מאמר ט"ז) explains that both the אֵרִי and the נֹשֶׁר allude to guarding the eyes. אֵרִי are the same letters as רֹאִי, looking, and נֹשֶׁר also represents guarding the eyes. The Tur, beginning of Shulchan Aruch, quotes from Pirkei Avos (5:20), הָיוּ... קַל כְּנֹשֶׁר לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אָבִיךָ שְׂבִשְׂמִים, that a person should be "swift like an eagle... to do the will of your Father in heaven". The Tur writes that this means that one should be swift to guard his eyes, because the eyes are the beginning of aveiros, for the eyes see and then the heart desires, until it can lead to aveiros, *r'l*. This tells us two things: (1) When one sanctifies his eyes, he has made himself into a Mishkan, a place for the Shechinah to reside. (2) The Mishkan, itself, was built and sanctified with the *kedushah* of the eyes of Bnei Yisrael.⁷

Serving Hashem in This World

Reb Yaakov Kamanetzky zt'l explained the mitzvah of *pidyon haben*. The Sforno (Shemos 13:2) states that before the pidyon, the child isn't permitted to work. Throughout

7. The Gemara (Bechoros 8b) states that the סְבִי דְבֵי אֲתֵנָּה, elders of Athens, asked Reb Yehoshua ben Chananya, "Where is the center of the world?" Reb Yehoshua raised a finger and said, "Here." Reb Mordechai Yosef of Izhbitza zt'l explained the depth of Reb Yehoshua's answer (because the Gemara wouldn't have told us about this discussion if there wasn't a lesson for us to learn from it. Reb Yehoshua ben Levi was certainly teaching important lessons. He wasn't merely trying to silence the "elders of Athens" with a witty response). The Izbitzer explains that Chazal tell us that the Beis HaMikdash is the center of the world (see Yoma 54b). Reb Yehoshua raised his finger, which is near the heart, and said that the middle of the world is here. This is because he had turned his heart into a Mishkan, a place where the Shechinah resides, and that is the center of the world.

The heart is where there generally burns a fire and a desire for temptation and sin. When one turns that over and makes his heart desire Hashem and ruchniyus, he has succeeded in turning himself into a Beis HaMikdash.

his life, he wouldn't be able to work if he didn't have a *pidyon haben*. Just as there is a halachah that one may not do work with an animal that is kodesh for the Beis HaMikdash, a firstborn is also holy, and he may not work. The *pidyon* enables him to be involved in the work of this world.

Reb Yaakov Kamanetzky asks that if so, what is the joy of a *pidyon haben*? Isn't it better for the child before the *pidyon haben*, when he was holy for Hashem?

Reb Yaakov replies that before the *pidyon*, the child was living a spiritual existence, like when his soul was in heaven, but this isn't the purpose. We are meant to be in this world, struggle with the yetzer hara, and nevertheless, sanctify Hashem's name. *Pidyon haben* is a great *simchah* because it enables the child to interact with this world, and that is the entire purpose of creation.

Chazal (Pesachim 109a) say, אין שמחה אלא בבשר, "There is no joy without meat". It is repeated in the name of the Baal Shem Tov HaKadosh (see Baal Shem Tov al HaTorah, Bereishis, note 75) that Hashem's joy is from בשר, from people, בשר ודם. Hashem desires the service of human beings, who have challenges and tests over the service of the *malachim*. Hashem's pleasure and joy are specifically from them.

A hint to this concept is the pasuk (Shemos 10:9) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּנֵעָרֵינוּ וּבְזִקְנֵינוּ יֵלֶךְ, "Moshe said, 'With our youngsters and with our elders shall we go.' Why did Moshe mention the "youngsters" before the "elders"? Generally, we give honor to the elders, and he should have mentioned them first!

Shevet HaLevi zt'l answers that even when Bnei Yisrael lived in the very impure land of Mitzrayim, they were cautious with their kedushah (see Shemos Rabba 1:28). As is known, when one is young, he has much greater and bitter tests to maintain the kedushah than those who are old. One grows from tests, so the younger generation was on a higher level than the older generation. This is the reason Moshe mentioned the youths first.

Chazal (Pesachim 8a) say, אבוקה להבדלה מצוה מן המזבח. Literally, this means that when we say the brachah בורא מאורי האש it is better to use a havdalah candle that has at least two wicks, so it will appear like a torch.

Yalkut Garshuny (אות ו') explains this Gemara b'derech remez. אבוקה can be translated as a battle or a wrestle. (See for example Bereishis 32:25, וַיִּלָּחֶם אִישׁ עִמּוֹ, "a man wrestled with him...") הַבְדֵּלָה can mean when one separates himself from bad deeds. Chazal say, אבוקה, להבדלה, when one battles and wrestles with the yetzer hara to free himself from the bad, it is a מצוה מן המזבח, the most ideal accomplishment.

The holy sefer Avodas Yisrael (Haftarah Vayigash) writes, "There are many ways to serve Hashem. Firstly, the straight way, to learn Torah and to be involved in avodah and mitzvos all day long, and to afflict oneself by being *parush*, separated from the *taavos* and pleasures of this world. There is another path for those who want to be holy. This *derech* is to eat and drink and partake in these activities in a holy manner (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 231, and the *kavanos* of the Arizal, and other holy sefarim). Certainly, those who can sanctify even the physical deeds they do and their *taavos*, their table is like a *mizbeiach*. This is an even greater form of kedushah. When one is occupied with Torah and tefillah, the yetzer hara isn't so strong to entice him that he should go off this good path and go on a bad path. This is because (Koheles 8:5) שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יֵדַע דֶּבַר רָע, "He who performs the mitzvos will know no bad." But when one falls from his *madreigah*, and he desires to eat (or other *taavos*), but he breaks his temptation, and he doesn't eat and drink like an animal. Rather, he eats to satisfy his soul so he can serve Hashem, and have a heart that is open and wise in Torah, and other high intentions, then his avodah is even greater, and it creates a *nachas ruach* for Hashem yisbarach, a thousand times more."

Chazal (Bava Basra 7b) teach that tzaddikim don't have to pay the tax to pay for the construction of a wall to guard the city. The

Gemara explains that they are protected without weapons, and without the wall, etc., because their good deeds protect them. Chazal learn this from the pasuk (Tehillim 139:18) אֶסְפָּרָם מִחוּל יָרֵבּוֹן, "Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand." Rashi writes, "Just as the sand protects the world from the waves of the sea, so that the waves shouldn't flood the entire world, so do the deeds of tzaddikim protect them."

Reb Boruch Shimon Shneerson zt'l asked that there are many shields and protections in the world. Why do the pasuk and Chazal specifically use the mashal of the sand at the seashore, which protects the world from the sea? Why wasn't any other example used?

He explains that each grain of sand on its own is nothing at all. It can't create any protection. But many grains of sand act as the greatest protection. Similarly, the good deeds of tzaddikim might appear small and insignificant when you look at each one individually. But tzaddikim have many good deeds, and this protects them.

Sometimes, our good deeds seem small and insignificant. But when you put them all together, they possess strength that can't be stopped. Each good deed and every time a person holds back from performing an

aveirah, another grain of sand is created, and they unite and turn into a great force that can protect the entire world.⁸

Or Zarua (siman 422) writes, "My heart tells me, I, Yitzchak the author, that just as a small rasha is not buried next to a big rasha, so, too, one shouldn't bury a tzaddik next to a chasid." A chasid is on a higher level than a tzaddik. A tzaddik keeps the Torah, but the chasid is on a higher level, because he also sanctifies himself with the permitted, and he makes gedarim, boundaries, לפנים משורת הדין. Therefore, they shouldn't be buried next to each other. This is written in Shulchan Aruch (Yorah Deiah 362:5), as well. They aren't buried together because they aren't on the same level.

We add that also when they are alive, one who sanctifies himself with boundaries to distance himself from aveiros, is on a much higher level than those who keep the Torah without this caution. An example of this is someone who guards his eyes *before* he is confronted with a test, so he won't come to be tested. There are many other examples. He is on a far higher level than even the good Yidden who keep the Torah, but without making these boundaries.

8. A chashuve Yid told me that his father had an unfiltered computer at home. His children spoke to him and tried convincing him to install a filter (especially since there were some family members who occasionally surfed on "not the best places" on their father's computer, r'l), but he refused. He feared that a filter would prevent him from accessing the sites he was accustomed to accessing. (This is a fear that many have, but it is generally unfounded. Whatever one needs, he can easily get to, even with a filter.) This man had many grandchildren who were waiting for shidduchim. The person who told me this story had a twenty-four years old son, who was having trouble finding a shidduch. The grandchildren asked their grandfather that he should set up a strong filter, and perhaps in that merit, Hashem will perform chesed with them, and they will get engaged.

On the 15th of Cheshvon, this year (5786), their grandfather said that if, within forty days, one of them gets engaged, he would install a filter. They wrote up a contract. On one side of the page were the names of all the older grandchildren, and on the other side was the grandfather's promise that if one of them got engaged within forty days, he would filter his computer.

With Hashem's help, on the fortieth day, the twenty-four-year-old bachur got engaged. It was hashgachah pratis that the shidduch was finalized on the final day. The girl was from another country. The girl's family wanted to push off the engagement for the next day, but since the bachur and his family had already scheduled their return flight, the girl's family agreed to make the engagement a day earlier – on the fortieth day of the kabbalah!

When one is cautious with his kedushah, and he makes gedarim and takes on kabbalos, he will merit feeling the kedushah of the mitzvos. A hint to this is the Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 24:6) כל מקום שאתה מוצא בו גדר ערוה אתה מוצא בו גדר קדושה, "Every place that there is a גדר, gate, protecting from sins of *arayos*, kedushah is there." This means that since he is cautious with his *kedushah*, he will be able to experience the sweetness of *kedushah* with every holy deed he performs. He will experience the amazing joy of being close to Hashem.

Beis Avraham (Vayigash) explains the Chazal (Shabbos 10b) that Hashem says, מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנני ושבת שמה, "I have a good present in My treasury, and it is called Shabbos." The Beis Avraham explains: "גנני is gematria 70, the letter ע, which means eyes (עיני). When one guards his eyes with kedushah and taharah not to become tarnished with forbidden sights, and he also has a good eye, to see the good in his fellow man, and to be happy for his fellow man, such a person will merit the good gift, and he will experience Shabbos Kodesh."⁹

9. A person was sitting in his house, and it was cold. He turned on the heater, but it was still cold. He couldn't understand why. But then a wise person came and told him, "The heater is working, and is giving off heat, but if the windows are open, it will stay cold here."

The nimshal is as follows: There are people who invest in Shabbos, wanting to experience its kedushah. They daven and sing zemiros with warmth, but inside they feel cold. They wonder why. The answer is that if the windows of one's eyes and mouth are open and unguarded, even if he tries to warm himself with good deeds, he will remain cold. One must first guard his eyes and mouth, and then he can experience the warmth of Shabbos kodesh and avodas Hashem.

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

A few days afterward, he was at another event. Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l was there, and from a distance, Reb Chaim motioned for him to come over. The photographer looked around, trying to understand who Reb Chaim was calling because he couldn't imagine that Reb Chaim was looking for him. Reb Chaim motioned to him, implying, "I mean you."

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

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

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

The photographer understood that Reb Chaim was referring to the test that he passed, in order to guard his eyes. He thought to himself, "If Reb Chaim knows, Hashem certainly knows!" His good deed wouldn't be forgotten.

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

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

The students answered, "He is Nosson the baal aveirah, and we don't see anything over his head."

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

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

Reb Akiva told him this was why a halo of light shone above his head. Reb Akiva said, "This is your

Bitachon Brings Salvations

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

Chazal tell us that the word כרבים comes from the words כרביא, "like children." This is because the faces on the *keruvim* appeared like those of two young children. The Divrei Binah says that the young faces on the keruvim were to represent the merit of bitachon. It states (Tehillim 131:2) אם לא שויתי "I swear that I stilled and silenced my soul like a suckling child at his mother's side like the suckling child is my soul." Dovid HaMelech says that he stilled and silenced his soul, and remained calm and unworried because he trusted in Hashem like a young, nursing child who relies on his mother to feed him.¹⁰

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

The Divrei Yisrael of Modzhitz zt'l says that the menorah teaches us a lesson in bitachon. It states (25:31) תיעשה המנורה. The nekudos on these words indicate that the menorah was made on its own.¹¹

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

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

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

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

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

portion in this world, and you will merit Olam HaBa."

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

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

10. When someone asked the Vilna Gaon zt'l to explain the trait of bitachon, the Vilna Gaon responded that Dovid HaMelech already described it with the words אם לא שויתי נפשי כגמל עלי אמו כגמל עלי נפשי. It is to trust in Hashem as an infant relies on its mother.

11. If Moshe made the menorah by himself, it would state תיעשה המנורה. תיעשה, which implies it was made on its own.

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

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

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

The Vilna Gaon zt'l says that the same occurs with people. When they are young, they trust Hashem, and Hashem takes care of them. When they get older, they think they can support themselves, and then they lose the special hashgachah pratis they once had.¹²

Praising Hashem brings Salvations

The Zera Shimshon (Beshalach 24) points out that when you spell out נ"ם in full like this:

נו"ן סמ"ך, the added letters (called מילוי) also spell נ"ם. (There is a second נ"ן in נו"ן, and the letters מ"ך in סמ"ך are gematria 60, the same as נ"ם. So, within נ"ם, there is another נ"ם.) He explains that when you praise Hashem for the miracle that occurred to you, you become a worthy candidate for another miracle.

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

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

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

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

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

This is brought down in halachah. When a miracle happens to a person, and he returns to that place, he says the brachah שַׁעֲשֵׂה בְרוּךְ... שַׁעֲשֵׂה

¹² This is also alluded to in the Gemara (Bava Kama 92:) "People say, 'When we were young, we were like men. When we became older, we were like children.'" Rashi writes, "We were respected like adults when we were young. When we become older, we become small and unimportant like children." The explanation can be that when we were young, we trusted in Hashem, so Hashem cared for us. But when we become older, we think we can fend for ourselves, and we lose this benefit.

הוא, praising Hashem for the miracle that occurred. And if he experienced two or more miracles in his lifetime, when he praises Hashem for the miracles that occurred at that location, he should simultaneously praise Hashem for all his other salvations he experienced.

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

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

We also praise Hashem *before* the miracle occurred. This enables the miracle to occur.

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

Beis Medresh with a Minyan

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

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

The Gemara (Brachos 7:8.) brings several sources that one should daven with a minyan. One is from the pasuk (Tehillim 69:14),

"I pray to you at a desired time." ואני תפילתי לך ה' עת רצון. We see that the ideal to daven is at an עת רצון, a desired time. The Gemara adds that this is when the *tzibur* is davening."

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

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

It states (Tehillim 102:18), פנה אל תפילת הערער, "Turn to the tefillah of the Arar. Reb Chaim Volozhiner zt'l (Ruach Chaim, Avos) explains that פנה אל תפילת הערער means "alone." פנה, Hashem turns to look at this person and his prayer, to analyze his deeds and determine whether he deserves to be answered. The pasuk concludes, ולא בזה את, תפילתם, "He doesn't despise their prayer." This half of the pasuk refers to when one davens with a minyan. This is the reason לא בזה את תפילתם, Hashem will not despise their tefillah.

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

Chofetz Chaim (Nidchei Yisrael 5) writes:

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

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

humiliation to prevent us from davening... We will now discuss the importance of tefillah b'tzibbur.

"There is a great benefit to daven with a minyan because the tefillah is more likely to be accepted. Even if it isn't the best tefillah, nevertheless, since many are saying it, the merit of the group is great and the tefillah won't be rejected. Therefore, in our times, when there is so much on people's minds, and who can say that he davens perfectly, one should be cautious to daven with a minyan so his tefillah is not discarded.

"When there is kriyas haTorah, such as on Monday and Thursday, one must certainly daven with a minyan, so he can hear the kriyas haTorah, which is a takanah of Moshe Rabbeinu, as the Gemara (Bava Kama ch.2) teaches. The Gemara Megillah says that even those who lived in villages would come to the cities on Mondays and Thursdays so they could hear kriyas haTorah. So, someone living in the city is certainly obligated to daven with a minyan and hear kriyas haTorah."¹³

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

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

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

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

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