

# *Torah Wellsprings*

*Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita*

*Re'eh*





# Torah WELLSPRINGS

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Mail@TorahWellsprings.com**  
**718.484.8136**

**Weekly bulk orders in USA:**  
**Wholesale@BeerEmanah.com**

*Weekly in your email free!*

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

*Lashon Kodesh*

**באר הפרשה**

**subscribe+subscribe@beerhaparsha.com**

*English*

**Torah Wellsprings**

**Torah+subscribe@torahwellsprings.com**

*Yiddish*

**דער פרשה קוואל**

**yiddish+subscribe@derparshakval.com**

*Spanish*

**Manantiales de la Torá**

**info+subscribe@manantialesdelatora.com**

*French*

**Au Puits de La Paracha**

**info+subscribe@aupuitsdelaparacha.com**

*Italian*

**Le Sorgenti della Torah**

**info+subscribe@lesorgentidellatorah.com**

*Russian*

**Колодец Торы**

**info+subscribe@kolodetztory.com**



**USA OFFICE** Mechon Beer Emunah  
1630 50th St, Brooklyn NY 11204  
718.484.8136

### ERETZ YISROEL OFFICE

מכון באר האמונה  
רח' דובב מישרים 4/2  
עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א  
025 688 040

**יו"ל ע"י מכון באר אמונה**

**COPYRIGHT 2025 כל הזכויות שמורות**

Duplication of this gilyon in any format, for any sales or marketing purpose, without written permission by Machon Be'er Emunah, is against the law and Halacha.

# Table of Contents

*Torah Wellsprings - Re'eh*

<b>ראה אנכי - See Hashem in All Situations.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Tzedakah .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<b>Serving Hashem in This Generation.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Consistency .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Desire to Serve Hashem.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Elul .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## Torah Wellsprings - Re'eh

### ראה אנכי – See Hashem in All Situations

The parashah begins with the words (11:26) ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה, "Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse." The Baal HaTurim writes, "ראה אנכי means to look at the Aseres HaDibros..." where it states אנכי ה' אלקיך, "I am Hashem, your G-d." The Nesivos Shalom zt'l explains that this means that a person should always ראה אנכי, see Hashem. He should recognize that Hashem is the reason and force behind everything that occurs. It states ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה. This means we should recognize that אנכי is the root of all the ברכה וקללה, blessings and curses. Everything that happens to you, the good and what appears to be the opposite of good, recognize that it is from Hashem.

It states (Tehillim 128:2) יגיע כפיך כי תאכל אשריך, "If you eat the toil of your palms, you are praiseworthy, and it is good for you."

כפיך refers to the palm. The pasuk doesn't say ידיך, the toil of your hands, but rather כפיך, the toil of your palms. It is tough to work with only the palm of the hand. One needs fingers to help the palm. The pasuk states כפיך to indicate that we work for our parnassah, but our hands are limited. If it were solely due to the work of our hands, we would fail. Our success comes from Hashem's blessings.

It states in this week's parashah (15:10) כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכה ה' אלקיך בכל מעשך ובכל משלך ידך, "For this thing, Hashem, your G-d, will bless you in all your work and in all your endeavors." Reb Moshe Kobriner zt'l taught that the brachos will come because משלך, you sent your hands to do the work, but you didn't send your head, and you didn't send your heart. This means that even as you work, your head, heart, and bitachon are with Hashem. Therefore, you will succeed.<sup>1</sup>

We must remember that ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה, that even the curses, and even the losses, are also from אנכי, Hashem. The Meor Einayim (V'eschanan) writes that the thoughts that come to a person's mind, what he should do in business, for his parnassah, are from Hashem. Sometimes, a thought was sent so he should succeed, and sometimes the thought was an idea that would lead to a loss, because it was bashert for him to lose money at this time. This is because a Yid must believe that the good, and also the opposite, are from Hashem.

He writes, "Every Yid must believe, with everything he does, including parnassah and business, that the idea that came to his mind to act in that manner was sent to him from Heaven, to direct him on the good path so that he will earn money from his business, for that was Hashem's will at this time... And the opposite is also true, chas v'shalom.

---

1. Rebbe Yitzchak Eizik Kahanah zt'l hy'd taught: When Shimon gives tzedakah to Reuven, Reuven doesn't thank Shimon's hand; he thanks Shimon. The hand is but the messenger – it is Shimon who should be thanked. Even more so, he should thank Hashem because Hashem provided Shimon with the money to give to Reuven. This is alluded to in the pasuk (16:17) איש כמותת ידו כברכת ה' אלקיך אשר נתן לך. It can be translated, איש כמותת ידו, just as when Shimon gives with his hand, one doesn't thank Shimon's hand, similarly, כברכת ה' אלקיך, we should have *hakaras hatov* primarily to Hashem.

In halachah, we find that the hands are most susceptible to becoming *tamei*. We, therefore, must wash our hands before eating, etc. (see *Orach Chaim* 4). This is because the hands fool people. They think, כחי ועוצם ידי, that everything is dependent on their hands. And that is *tumah*. Knowing that everything is, בידי שמים, in Hashem's hands, is purity.

If Hashem desires that he should lose money, Hashem will give him an idea that isn't good so that he should lose money."<sup>2</sup>

It states (Devarim 8:17-18) וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְּךָ כֹּחִי וְעֵצָם יָדִי עָשָׂה לִי אֶת הַחַיִּיל הַזֶּה, וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי הוּא הִנְתֵּן לְךָ כֹּחַ לַעֲשׂוֹת הַיָּל, "You will say to yourself, 'My

2. Reb Shimon Shpitzer Shlita told the following story, which he knows first-hand:

A wealthy person purchased a property for investment purposes at an excellent price. The property was a parcel of land zoned for agricultural use. Some time passed, and the value of the property increased, giving him the ability to sell it at a substantial profit, so he asked his rebbe and rosh yeshiva, Rav Kopelman zt'l for his opinion on the matter. Rav Kopelman advised him not to sell.

Sometime later, the prices went up even higher, and he, once again, asked his rosh yeshiva if he should sell. Again, Rav Kopelman advised him to hold.

Some more time passed, the prices went up again, and now the property was very valuable. He really wanted to sell, but he knew that if he asked the rosh yeshiva, he would likely tell him again not to sell. So, this time, he didn't ask any questions, and he sold the land.

But very soon regretted his actions. A short time after the sale, the property's zoning changed from agricultural to commercial use. Large buildings could now be built on this plot, and the property's value skyrocketed. He could have earned so much more had he waited a bit longer.

He went to Rav Kopelman and expressed his regret that he didn't follow his advice. Reb Kopelman explained to him that, logically, there was no reason to sell the property. The value was consistently increasing, so why rush? But he sold it because Hashem took away his intelligence and business acumen for a moment.

The rosh yeshiva explained: "A person isn't a car. When a car has a tank full of gas, it can drive for hours. It won't need additional gas. But a person needs to receive sense from Hashem *at every moment*, so he will know how to act in every situation. This is what happened to you. For a moment, Hashem didn't give you *daas*, and look what happened? Don't ask, 'Where was my intelligence? Why did I do something so foolish? Because your business abilities were never yours. It was given to you from Hashem. Now it was *bashert* for you to lose money; therefore, Hashem withheld from you common sense, and you made this error."

In addition to the realization that everything – including intelligence – is from Hashem, there are some other lessons that we can learn from this episode.

This person wanted to sell the property, but his rosh yeshiva told him to wait. And if he had waited some more, he would have earned a much larger profit. This teaches us a lesson regarding tefillah. Sometimes we daven, and our tefillos aren't answered. We daven some more, but Heaven says wait. Not yet. We shouldn't be upset about this, and we shouldn't lose hope, because Hashem is preparing for us an even greater salvation. In the end, Hashem will answer our tefillos, and the gain will be far greater than had we received our desires immediately.

We can compare it to a new custom that has been going on lately in the batei midrashim. Nowadays, when someone goes around collecting money, the collector often holds a credit card terminal. Some people don't have cash on them, but they have their credit card, and thereby, they can donate. When people give tzedakah with cash, they might give a shekel or a quarter. But when they donate with a machine, they are embarrassed to give so little, so they give five shekels, a dollar, or more. So, when a credit card is used, the collector receives more money. With a credit card, the money comes to him *later*. So, we see that when one receives his salvation later, the salvation is greater than when he receives it right away. Therefore, those who must wait for their salvation, let them remain strong and not lose hope. There is a reason for the waiting. The salvation will be greater in the end.

It states (Eichah 3:8) גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשְׁנֹעַ שְׁתָּם תִּפְלְתִּי "Though I cry out and plead, He shuts out my prayer." This pasuk is saying that our tefillos aren't heard when we are in galus. However, the word שְׁתָּם is the *roshei teivos* for מֶלֶךְ שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה, "a king who hears tefillos". This is to remind us that our tefillos are always heard and

strength and the might of my hand that has accumulated this wealth for me.' But you must remember Hashem your G-d, for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth." *חַיִל* is translated as wealth, but the Ramban translates it as victory in war. We think that we win wars with our own strength, but we must remember that Hashem gave us the strength to win the wars.

The Ramban writes, "It is known that Yisrael are mighty and they are warriors. The Torah compares them to lions and wolves of prey [to demonstrate their strength], and they won wars against the kings of Canaan. [But although they are mighty, their strength wouldn't suffice to win the great wars.] The Torah says that if

you think you won these wars with the might of your hand, you shall remember Hashem who took you out of Mitzrayim, when you didn't have any strength or might at all. Also, remember that you were in the desert, and you didn't have the strength to live there, and Hashem arranged all your needs for you. So, also your strength as warriors, it was with Hashem's strength. Hashem gave you the strength to win these wars."

The Ramban adds, "If you forget Hashem, your strength will weaken...." In contrast, if we believe that Hashem gives us strength, we will become even stronger. Hashem will grant us success and strength in all our endeavors.<sup>3</sup>

---

they will all be answered. There might be a waiting period, but the tefillos will eventually be answered.

We can learn another lesson from the above story. This wealthy person didn't want to follow his rosh yeshiva's counsel, so he didn't seek his advice, and he ended up forfeiting a lot of money. Let us learn from this our obligation, and our privilege, to listen to the gedolei Yisrael when they warn us to be distant from the internet, and the like. We will only gain when we adhere to their counsel. There are those who don't follow their counsel, and they think that they are gaining. But they will discover that they would have gained far more, had they listened to the chachamim.

**3.** A person, distant from Yiddishkeit, decided to begin attending beis kneses every Shabbos. The first week, he silently watched everything that was going on. After the tefillah, he approached the gabbai and said, "I decided that I want to come here every week, but there is a condition. I want you to treat me as a kohen. I have a lot of money, and I am willing to pay for it. If you will consider me a kohen, I will come here every week."

The gabbai said, "I have no problem with that, but I am not the only person in charge here. There is a committee of seven people who are in charge of the beis kneses. Once a week, we gather to discuss the beis kneses. If you want, at the next meeting, I will bring up your request, and we will decide."

Later that week, at the weekly meeting, the gabbai conveyed this man's request. They discussed it with full seriousness, and in the end, they all agreed they should take him up on his offer. The beis kneses was in desperate need of funds, and his offer to pay to be a kohen was attractive. They decided that for one hundred thousand dollars, they will appoint him as a kohen.

The following Shabbos, the man returned to the beis kneses. The gabbai called him up for the first aliyah because he was now a kohen. After the tefillah, this new kohen threw a kiddush to celebrate his new status. After the kiddush, the gabbai came over to this man and said, "Forgive my curiosity, but why was it so important to you to be a kohen? What were you lacking in your life up to this point that becoming a kohen would fill?"

The man replied, "I don't know much Torah, and I am not very religious. But I know that my father was a kohen and my grandfather was a kohen, so I decided that I must become a kohen as well. I was prepared to pay all the money in the world to be a kohen."

In short, this man paid a lot of money to get something he already had. The same can be said about the people who work extra hard to earn their parnassah. Whatever is bashert for them, they will get, even if



## Tzedakah

The Gemara (Bava Basra 10a) states, "Whoever closes his eyes from giving tzedakah, it is like he worshiped avodah zarah." This is derived from a pasuk in this week's parashah (15:9) הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ פֶּן יִהְיֶה דְבָר עִם לִבְּךָ בְּלִיעַל, "Beware, lest there be in your heart an unfaithful thought," regarding someone who doesn't want to help others in need, and בְּלִיעַל is avodah zarah. This tells us that ignoring the financial needs of others is like avodah zarah. Reb Elchanan Wasserman zt'l hy'd (Kobetz Shiurim 51) explains that this can be explained in a straightforward manner. Avodah zarah is when one thinks that an idol has the strength to help him or cause him harm (*chas v'shalom*). Refraining from giving

tzedakah is similar, because the person thinks that money can help him, and that lacking money will harm him. He places his trust in his money, and not in Hashem. Therefore, refraining from giving tzedakah is compared to avodah zarah, r'l.

The mitzvah of *tzedakah* is discussed this week, and now that Elul is approaching, we add that giving *tzedakah* is a primary aspect of *teshuvah*.

It states (Bamidbar 10:32) וְהָיָה הַטּוֹב הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יִיטִיב, "The good that Hashem grants us, we will bestow on you." The Chasam Sofer zt'l explains that one of the great kindnesses that Hashem does with us is that He grants us the ability to נְהַמְּכֵנוּ לְךָ, to do favors for others.<sup>4</sup>

---

they don't work so hard. So they are working hard to get something that is already theirs.

A young man in Brazil accidentally drove his simple, inexpensive car into a very expensive car that was parked at the side of the road. He immediately got out of his car to assess the damage he had caused. He saw that he had scratched the entire side of the expensive car. He wrote his phone number on a piece of paper and placed it on the windshield. He wrote, "Please call me because I want to pay for the damages."

A week passed, and he didn't get a phone call. He drove to the site of the accident to see whether the car was still there. Indeed, it was still parked at the side of the road, and it still had a big scratch on its side. This time, he wrote his phone number on a bigger page and requested that he call him.

The call came a few days afterwards. The person said, "I just placed \$50,000 into your account. I found out that you are poor, so I wanted to help you. You may not have realized it, but the paper you used to write your note to me was the backside of a bank statement. I read the bank statement and I saw that you had a debt for \$50,000, so I deposited that amount into your account. If you ever need more money, contact me because I have never met an honest person like yourself." The lesson: When it is *bashert* for a person to receive money, Hashem has many ways to arrange it

Reuven and Shimon were debating the need for *hishtadlus*. Reuven said that *hishtadlus* was essential. "If you work hard, you have *parnassah*. If you don't work hard, you will have nothing at all."

Shimon countered that *parnassah* comes from Hashem, and even if one doesn't work hard, Hashem will send him *parnassah*.

They had this debate as they stood under an apple tree. At some point, Reuven climbed up the tree, reached the top, where there were the very best apples, plucked off a juicy apple, and started his climb down. He took a break in the middle of the tree and called down to Shimon, "You see, I worked hard, and I have an apple. You are lazy, you didn't climb the tree, and you have nothing."

Accidentally, Reuven dropped the apple, and it fell right into Shimon's hands. Shimon made a *brachah* and bit into the apple. Then he called up to Reuven and said, "What has just occurred proves that I am right. You worked hard, but your *hishtadlus* didn't bring you anything. On the contrary, it provided me with a delicious apple to eat, because that is what Hashem wanted."

4. A couple came to Reb Mordechai Gifter zt'l, rosh yeshivas Telz, with a *shalom bayis* problem. The wife said that she couldn't take out the garbage, as it was too heavy for her to carry, and the husband claimed

It states (Bamidbar 8:18-19) וַאֲפָקָה אֶת הַלְוִיִּים תַּחַת כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל... וְלִכְפֹּר עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל "I have taken the Levi'im instead of all the firstborn of Bnei Yisrael... to atone for Bnei Yisrael." The pasuk doesn't say that the Levi'im brought a korban, or anything like that, to bring kaparah for Bnei Yisrael. So, how did the Levi'im generate a kaparah for Bnei Yisrael? The Shem MiShmuel (ד"ה ולכפר 5670) explains that Bnei Yisrael had a good eye (עין טובה), because, at this time, Hashem was elevating the Levi'im, higher than them, and nevertheless, they weren't jealous of them. On the contrary, they had an עין טובה, a good eye, and were happy that the Levi'im were receiving this holiness and greatness. The attribute of עין טובה has all good attributes in it, as Chazal tell us, and their ayin tovah was their kaparah!

We say in Ashrei (Tehillim 145:16) פִּתְּחָה אֶת יָדְךָ פִּתְּחָה אֶת יָדְךָ, וּמַשְׁבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רְצוֹן "You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with its desire."

The pasuk is saying that Hashem gives food and parnassah to all.

A grandson of Rebbe Itzikel of Pshevorsk zt'l once said to his grandfather that the roshei teivos of פִּתְּחָה אֶת יָדְךָ spell פא"י, which is one of Hashem's holy names, and it is the name related to parnassah. Rebbe Itzikel replied that the roshei teivos of פִּתְּחָה אֶת יָדְךָ also spell פֶּאֶרְגִּינֵעַן אַ יוֹדֵן (to be happy when goodness comes to his fellow man). When one acquires this attitude of ayin tovah, פֶּאֶרְגִּינֵעַן אַ יוֹדֵן, it will be פא"י, the roshei teivos of פִּתְּחָה אֶת יָדְךָ, and he will receive parnassah in abundance.

### Serving Hashem in This Generation

The Chofetz Chaim (Mishlei Chofetz Chaim 16) told the following mashal:

There was a troop in the army that was very precious to the king, and they wore an expensive military uniform. Once, the king wanted to upgrade the uniform, to be even

---

that he is a talmid chacham and it isn't kavod haTorah to carry out the garbage. Reb Gifter told the couple, "You go home now. I have a plan to resolve your problem."

Reb Gifter inquired and found out that the garbage truck comes to this couple's home at 7:50 in the morning.

The next morning, at 7:45, Rwb Gifter knocked on their door and said, "Quickly, bring me the garbage bag. The garbage truck will soon be here, and the garbage must be out on time."

The couple obviously refused to give him the garbage bag, saying that they would manage on their own. The rosh yeshiva urged them to reconsider and to give him the garbage bag, but they wouldn't hear of it.

The rosh yeshiva left empty-handed, but he was satisfied, knowing that the husband learned the following lessons: (a) It isn't a lack in kavod haTorah to take out the garbage. Behold, the rosh yeshiva, himself, was ready to do it. (b) The most important place to perform chesed is in one's own home, for one's family. It is harder to help in the home because there is less appreciation, honor, and recognition, but it is the highest form of chesed. Whoever is closer to us deserves more of our efforts to help them.

Someone came to Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l. He said that he needed to be seen by a particular doctor. It was an emergency, but the doctor doesn't have any openings for the next few months. He requested that Reb Shlomo Zalman write a letter to the doctor, to request that the doctor figure out a way to squeeze him in earlier.

Reb Shlomo Zalman felt that an anonymous letter wouldn't be as effective, and he wanted to begin the letter with the words Dear... with the name of the doctor, but this person forgot the doctor's name. So, Reb Shlomo Zalman took out a phone book and began looking for the doctor's name. The man said, "I am so sorry that I am wasting the Rav's time."

Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach replied, "Do you know why time was created? To do chesed, and that is what I am doing now. So, this isn't a waste of time at all!"



Chazal (Shabbos 112b) say, "If the people of the early generations were like malachim, we are like humans. If the people of the early generations were like humans, we are like donkeys." There is a pattern of descent in the generations. If the early generations were like humans, we are like donkeys, etc. ד"ה עוד ג"ל רבוע, Titzaveh, (quoting in Or l'Shamayim, בריית מנוחה) teaches that this was true years ago, but in our generation, things have changed. In our time, darkness covers the earth, the yetzer hara is very powerful, and nevertheless, we strengthen ourselves to serve Hashem as

The story is written in (Shmuel 2, 17:28-29). When Dovid was escaping from his son, Avshalom, בְּרוֹזְלֵי הַגָּלְעָדִי sent the following gifts to Dovid: מִשְׁכָּב וְסֻפּוֹת וְקֶלֶךְ יוֹצֵר וְחֲטִים וְשִׂעָרִים וְקֶמַח וְקֹלֵי מִפּוֹל וְעֵדָשִׁים וְקֹלֵי, וּדְבַשׁ וְחֶמְאָה וְצֹאן וְשִׁפּוֹת בָּקָר הַגִּישׁוּ לְדָוִד

וְלֶעֱם אֲשֶׁר אָתָּו לֶאֱכֹל כִּי אָמְרוּ הָעָם רָעֵב וְעָיִף וְצָמָא בְּמִדְבָּר,  
 "Beds and bowls, and earthen vessels, and wheat and barley and flour and parched grain; and beans, and lentils and parched grain. And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine they presented to Dovid and to the people that were with him, to eat, for they said, "The people are hungry, faint, and thirsty from the wilderness."

Reb Chaim Shlomo Leibowitz zt'l, the Rosh yeshiva of Kamenetz, repeated what his grandfather, Reb Boruch Ber zy'a said about this episode. The greatness of בְּרוּזִי's deed was that he did it when Dovid wasn't on his throne. When a gift is given to a king at a time when he is in his palace and sits on his throne, he may not even accept the gift. If he does accept it, the king will probably give back a gift, which will be of slightly greater value than what the person gave him, but not much more than that. However, when the king is in exile, that gift is very precious to the king. בְּרוּזִי הגִּלְעָדִי gave a gift when Dovid had to leave his throne, and he was running away from Avshalom. The gift was very precious to the king; it gave him a lot of chizuk, and that is why בְּרוּזִי הגִּלְעָדִי's family deserved an immense reward.

Reb Boruch Ber concluded that in the time of the Beis HaMikdash, not every gift given to Hashem was accepted. But in our times, every mitzvah has great importance before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and therefore, we will be paid well for our good deeds.

The following is a lesson from the Apter Rav (Yalkut Ohev Yisrael, בחירה), and it was repeated by Rebbe Avraham Yaakov of Sadigura zt'l. The Apter Rav taught that Hashem's primary desire is that a person should have free will and choose to do good. When the Beis HaMikdash stood, *bechirah* wasn't in its perfect state. It wasn't that a person had a 50% percent choice to do good and a 50% percent ability to choose to do bad, because the Yid was more likely to choose good. This is because when the Beis HaMikdash stood, there was a *beis din* that punished aveiros

with *malkus* and with the four types of death (ארבע מיתות בית דין). Fear of punishment held people back from performing aveiros, and free choice wasn't at a 50/50% level. After the Churban Beis HaMikdash, free choice was still not fully in place. The chachamim of each generation had the power to make takanos and to execute punishments. Hashem refrained from bringing the geulah for so many years because free choice, which is the purpose of creation, was never thoroughly practiced. The Apter Rav said that now we are living in the prime era of free choice. There is no punishment for performing aveiros. There isn't even shame. People who commit aveiros in our times seem to suffer no consequences. So, we are living in the era that is most precious to Hashem, the era of free will, and with our correct choices, Moshiach will come.

It states (Yechezkel 44:15) וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם בְּנֵי זָדוֹק אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְרוּ אֶת מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתַעֲוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מַעְלִי הַמֶּה וְקִרְבּוֹ אֵלַי לְשִׁירְתִּי "But the Kohanim the Levites, the sons of Tzadok, who kept the charge of My sanctuary when Bnei Yisrael went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to serve Me."

The Chofetz Chaim (Shem Olam ch.22) says that when one guards the *mishmeres hakodesh* when it was hard, בְּתַעֲוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מַעְלִי, he will merit to be close to Hashem.

"Bless the One Who keeps His promise to Yisrael." These words are written in the Haggadah Shel Pesach. The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt'l asked his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz of Lubavitch zt'l, "How is this a praise for Hashem? Is it a praise to Hashem to say that Hashem keeps His promises?"

The Rayatz replied that Hashem has immense pleasure from Klal Yisrael when they are in galus. The entire *Torah sh'Baal Peh* was developed, specifically during galus. The Mishnah, the Gemara, Sifra, Sifri, Rishonim, Acharonim, including the scholars of today, their Torah was created and taught in the most challenging times. These are wonderful gifts that we give to the Ribono

Shel Olam. When the geulah arrives, this *nachas ruach* will be lacking. Hashem won't have this pleasure anymore because we won't be able to bring these special gifts to Hashem from the galus. Therefore, it is a great praise to say that Hashem will keep his promise and redeem us. He is willing to go against His desire, and to refrain from receiving this pleasure, because of His promise to redeem Bnei Yisrael.

### Consistency

One of the difficult tests is to serve Hashem consistently. Sometimes a person can succeed in serving Hashem occasionally, but to do so every day, without fail, is a great challenge.

The renowned chasid, Reb Zalman Brizel z"l noticed that only by the korban tamid it states (Bamidbar 28:2) רִיחַ נִיחֻחַי, "My pleasure", whereas, by the other korbanos, it states רִיחַ נִיחֻחַ, that it is a pleasure, but it doesn't state נִיחֻחַי, that it is Hashem's pleasure. What is special about the korban tamid that it is called רִיחַ נִיחֻחַי? The korban tamid is special because it is constant, every day, and something constant is precious to Hashem. The korban is only one sheep in the morning and one sheep in the evening, but it is constant, and therefore, it creates a special pleasure before Hashem.

The Gemara (Zevachim 90b) states, תְּדִיר וּמוֹקֵדֶשׁ, תְּדִיר קוֹדֵם, if you have two korbanos, one is holier and one is constant, every day, the korban for every day comes first. Divrei Shmuel explains that this is because an avodah that is constant has an exceptional quality over other mitzvos that aren't constant.

Someone asked the Beis Avraham zy'a, "Teach me a path in avodas Hashem?" He advised him to be consistent in avodas Hashem. "For example, make a kabbalah to learn for five minutes, at a set time, but do so every day, without fail." He explained that inevitably, something that is constant will be tested at times. Sometimes, it will be very hard to keep his kabbalah. This is beneficial for him because a person grows from his tests. This is the reason something constant is a tremendous achievement.

(Written in Birkas Avraham, 27 מִכְתָּבֵי קוֹדֶשׁ <sup>5</sup>).

### Desire to Serve Hashem

Pirkei d'Reb Eliezer (ch.1) tells the story of how Reb Eliezer ben Horkinus began to study Torah.

Horkinus noticed that his son, Reb Eliezer, was crying as he plowed the field. He asked his son why he cried. Reb Eliezer replied, "I want to study Torah."

---

5. Last year, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, a twelve-year-old boy made a kabbalah not to speak during davening for forty days. (He explained that his rebbe in cheder taught them the importance of making a kabbalah for forty days, and the rebbe gave an example of a kabbalah not to speak during davening.) This twelve-year-old boy said that it should be for the merit of his sister, who was three years after he chasunah, and she didn't yet have children. (He actually forgot once, and he spoke during one tefillah. He made up for it by extending the forty days for another six days.)

The 6<sup>th</sup> of Av, of the same year (תשפ"ד) was Shabbos. On motzei Shabbos, as the boy was learning with his father, they received the good news that his sister had a child.

The boy began to tremble and told his father that he must go home to get something. A few minutes later, he returned with a calendar and showed it to his father. For the 6<sup>th</sup> of Av, he had written, "Mazal Tov! Mazal Tov! On this day, my sister will have a child." This was because he made his kabbalah on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, and exactly nine months afterwards, he knew that his sister would have her yeshuah. So, he marked it in his calendar, the salvation that he knew would certainly occur, and indeed, it did.

Now that Elul is approaching, it is a good time to make a kabbalah for forty days, until Yom Kippur, and this will be a good merit to be inscribed for a good year.



His father said, "You are twenty-eight years old! You want to begin studying Torah now? I advise that you get married. Your children will study Torah."

Two weeks passed, and Reb Eliezer ben Horkinus didn't eat anything at all. Eliyahu HaNavi came to him and said, "The son of Horkinus, why do you cry?"

He replied, "I want to study Torah."

Eliyahu said, "If you want to study Torah, go to Yerushalayim and study in the yeshiva of Reb Yochanan ben Zakai..."

Whoever sees this Midrash immediately asks, "Why did Reb Eliezer ben Horkinus merit that Eliyahu HaNavi come to him? At this time, he wasn't yet a talmid chacham! He was an *am ha'aretz*! He didn't even know how to say Shema, daven, or how to say birchas hamazon (as the Midrash tells us there)! If Eliyahu Hanavi came to him, why doesn't he come to us also, to tell us what we can do to grow in Torah and yiras Shamayim?

The answer is very simple. We can't compare ourselves to Reb Eliezer ben Horkinus. He so much wanted to learn Torah that he didn't eat anything for two weeks! Anyone who is on this level, and who truly desires to know Torah, and yearns for it with all his soul, Eliyahu will come to him, too, and teach him what he should do to grow in Torah.

The Gemara (Kesubos 63a) tells that when Kalba Savua's daughter married Reb Akiva, Kalba Savua was very upset, because, at that time, Reb Akiva was an *am ha'aretz*. He made a *neder* that his daughter can't enjoy anything from his vast wealth. When Reb Akiva returned with 24,000 students, Kalba Savua asked him to be *מתיר נדר*, to remove his *neder*. Reb Akiva asked him, "Would you have made this *neder* if you knew that in the future, I would become a Torah giant?" He said that he wouldn't have made this *neder*, and thereby, Reb Akiva was able to remove the vow.

Tosfos asks *הלא אסור לפתוח בנודר*, which means that if something new occurred, it isn't a *פתח*, an opening, to remove a *neder*. When Kalba Savua made the vow, Reb Akiva wasn't a Torah scholar. It was something new that occurred. So how could this be used as a *פתח*, an opening, to remove the *neder*?

Tosfos answers, "We can say that this isn't called *נולד*, something brand new, because R' Akiva went to yeshiva to study, and it is the way of those who go to study to become great in Torah."

But we wonder about this, because we see people who go to yeshiva to learn, and they don't always become great in Torah... The answer is that it all depends on *רצון*, how much a person desires to study and to know Torah. If one studies Torah with a desire to do whatever he can to grow in Torah, then even an *am ha'aretz* of forty years old, who doesn't know how to read, will undoubtedly become great in Torah. Those who go to yeshiva and don't become great in Torah it is because they don't invest all their energy in the Torah. Perhaps they want to learn Torah, but they want other things, too. Their desire isn't complete and perfect.

It is written in sefarim that the word *רצון*, desire, is the same letters as *צנור*, channel. When one pours water into a *צנור*, a channel, it comes out of the other end. But the water can't come out of both ends. The water emerges either from this side or from that side. The same can be said regarding success in Torah. *רצון*, desire, has a great strength; it is a *צנור*, channel for success. But that is solely when he wants *one* thing. If he wants other things as well, it won't have the same effect. But if he wants one thing, he will undoubtedly receive *siyata d'Shmaya*.

The Gemara (Chagigah 13b) states that malachim have six wings: two to cover their feet, two to cover their faces, and two to fly (and they also say *shirah*, songs to Hashem, with those two wings). After the Churban Beis HaMikdash, the malachim have only four wings. They lost the two to fly with. Let us learn from

this that when one isn't able to fly and grow from level to level – because he lacks *ratzon*, it means that he is in a state of a *churban*. *Ratzon* is essential.

The Satmer Rebbe *zt'l* explains the *piyut* ידיד נפש. It states there נכסוף נכספתי כי זה כמה נכסוף נכספתי, "For such a long time, I am yearning". The Satmer Rebbe says that נכסוף נכספתי is a double expression for wanting. This means to want again and again, even to want a hundred times, and to continue wanting until you succeed. (see Bava Metziah 31a, which learns a similar *drashah* from a similar expression.)

Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Shabbos (Orach Chaim 309:1) states that if a young child is holding a stone, the father may not pick up his son, because his son is holding *muktzah*. However, if the son is yearning for his father, the father may pick up his son. We can explain that if a person has a heart of stone, a foolish heart, it is like *muktzah* (מוקצה מחמת מיאוס, etc.). We are like the child who carries *muktzah*, and the father – our Father in heaven – doesn't lift us up. Nevertheless, if we yearn for our Father, Hashem will pick us up and help us get out of the bad ways we have fallen into.

We can also say a *tefillah*: "Father in heaven, even if I have a heart that is *muktzah*... please, see how much we love and desire to be close to You. Therefore, hold onto us, and don't let go. Raise us from the low places to the highest levels of *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*."

## Elul

Last week's *parashah* begins with the words והיה עקב תשמעון. Chazal say that the word והיה expresses happiness. When is there true happiness? עקב, when we reach the heel – the end of the year, because, תשמעון, that is the time of year that we listen to the Torah and change our ways.<sup>6</sup>

After the Minchah on *rosh chodesh* Elul, there was a custom that the *chazan* announced (Yirmiyahu 3:14) שובו בנים שובבים, "Return, rebellious children", arousing people to do *teshuvah* this month. The Chida (Birkei Yosef 581:1) praises the custom. Reb Chaim Palagi (Moed l'Kol Chai 15:3) explains that Hakadosh Baruch Hu announces in Heaven שובו בנים שובבים, and this is the reason the *chazan* would also say these words, to arouse people to *teshuvah*.

In the court of Rebbe Dovid Biderman *zt'l*, the atmosphere of *erev Shabbos Mevorchim Elul* resembled *Erev Yom Kippur*. The *gabbaim* would ask each other for *mechilah*, as we do before Yom Kippur.

Many *sefarim* bemoan that we have lost the awesome feeling that people once had when it was Elul. In the past, Elul was a very special time, which could be felt in the atmosphere. Nevertheless, we *know* that these are special days, and we can *do deeds* that are appropriate for this time of year. This will help us in our judgment on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.<sup>7</sup>

---

6. Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zy'a* used to cover himself with blankets from the fifteenth of Av. He explained, "It says in *sefarim* that fish tremble at this time of year. Fish don't know what Elul is all about. Those who learn *sefarim* and understand the essence of Elul should certainly be afraid and shiver."

7. There was a businessman who would often seek business counsel from the Sfas Emes. Once, the Rebbe told him, "Now is Elul. The wisest investment, which earns the greatest dividends – spiritually and materially – is to invest in this month."

The Or HaMeir's sister was making a wedding and she very much wanted her brother, the Or HaMeir, should attend. The Or HaMeir debated whether he should go to the wedding, because the *chasunah* was in Elul, and the Or HaMeir generally didn't travel during Elul.

He resolved to begin the journey, and if Heaven doesn't want him to go, he would receive a sign from above to return home.

The Zohar calls Rosh Hashanah-היום. This parashah – parashas Re'eh begins with the words ראה אנכי נותן לפניכם היום, which can be translated as, "See that I am giving you days before Rosh Hashanah (לפניכם היום), so you can prepare yourselves on these days for the judgment of Rosh Hashanah."<sup>8</sup>

When a person presses the brakes of a car, it doesn't stop instantly. The wheels turn slowly, and gradually the car stops. But if someone pulls the emergency hand brake, the vehicle will stop short immediately.

There are times when teshuvah is compared to someone pressing on the brakes

of a car. This alludes to the gradual approach to change, where a person slowly improves his ways. This is the standard path for teshuvah. But there are times when one should make an immediate change. Rosh Chodesh Elul is such a time. Although change is generally done gradually, step-by-step, Elul is a time to make an abrupt change and improve one's ways. About this, it states (Yeshayah 55:7) יֵעֹזֵב רָשָׁע דְּרָכּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶוֹן מִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ וְיָשָׁב אֶל ה', "The wicked shall give up his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts, and he shall return to Hashem." Sometimes one's entire path has to be changed, now and abruptly.<sup>9</sup>

---

At the beginning of his journey, he saw a young goy beating an old man. Startled, the Or HaMeir asked the young goy why he was hitting the old person.

The gentile replied, "This old man is my father. We made a deal that he would take care of my children so I could work the fields. But he sleeps all day, so I have to take care of my children, and I can't plant. If I don't plant during this month, we will lose the crops of the entire year."

The Or HaMeir understood that Hashem was sending him a message: If you miss this month, the results will be felt the entire year, and he returned home.

Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz zy'a arrived at an inn together with his chassidim, and they overheard the innkeeper tell his staff, "This month is the peak season for our business. There is more work now than in the entire year. But whoever works hard this month will earn enough money to last him the entire year. Therefore, my dear workers, I recommend that you work extra hours this month and be fully devoted to your chores. Later on, you will be glad you did so."

Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz told his chassidim, "We've heard enough. Now we can return home."

8. The Baal HaTurim points out that the final letters of (11:27) תָּוֹרָה spell את הברכה אשר תשמעו, indicating that if you want to do teshuvah, begin by studying Torah.

9. A hungry man came to a soup kitchen, requesting a free meal. The man at the counter replied, "We are very organized here. You can't just come in and grab a meal. Go to the second floor, room 245, to register and tell them what type of meal you want."

He was hungry and exhausted and just wanted something to eat, but he had no choice but to follow the procedure. He climbed the stairs and requested a meat meal. They replied, "This is a very organized chesed organization. Tell us what type of meat you want to eat. We have cooked chicken, fried chicken, stuffed chicken, schnitzel, various cuts of meat, and turkey. What do you prefer?"

He didn't care. He just wanted a meal, but since they were so particular about it, he told them what he wanted.

"Go to the third floor, room 342," they instructed him.

He dragged himself to room 342, assuming that a meal would be prepared for him there, but the secretary at room 342 said, "We don't serve meals here. This is the office where you order the side dishes. There are several options. You can order rice, potatoes, green beans..." He chose his menu, and they told him to go down to the first floor, room 111, where he would be served his meal.

When he reached room 111, he saw a sign saying, "Thank you for coming. Come again."



It states in Tehillim (27:4) which we say on Elul, אֶחָת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת ה' אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ שְׁבִתִּי בְּבֵית ה' כָּל יְמֵי, "One thing I ask from Hashem... to dwell in Hashem's house all the days of my life... and to visit His sanctuary..." The Ponovitzer Rav zt'l and Reb Yankele Galinsky zt'l were discussing this pasuk, and they asked that the pasuk seems to contradict itself. It begins with Dovid HaMelech requesting to dwell permanently in Hashem's house, as it states שְׁבִתִּי בְּבֵית ה', and afterwards, he requests to visit Hashem's house, as he said, וְלִבְקֹר בְּהִיכָלוֹ. So, did he want to live permanently in the beis medresh, or to be there as a visitor?

The Ponovitzer Rav replied with a story that happened to him. A museum in Europe had many old manuscripts from the Rishonim, and they were opening the doors for visitors to come and read from the documents. The Ponovitzer Rav went, and when he arrived, he discovered that he first had to buy a ticket to be allowed entry. Then he had to wait in line for his turn. Each person was permitted to be inside for only twenty minutes. There was a talmid chacham from Australia who stood in line behind the Ponovitzer Rav, and as they waited for their turn, the talmid chacham from Australia said pearls of divrei Torah. The Ponovitzer Rav was enjoying every moment. Every

minute, he was hearing another chiddush. It was a sweetness that couldn't be explained in words. Then it was the Ponovitzer Rav's turn to go inside, and he had a dilemma. How could he leave this conversation, which he was enjoying so much?

Obviously, he went inside. He travelled all this distance for that purpose, and the time was ticking, and he had to make use of every moment.

The Ponovitzer Rav said that there are people who are in the beis medresh, and they feel that they have a lot of time. They are in no rush, because they think that what they don't learn today, they can learn tomorrow. And then there are those who feel exactly like I did when I went to the museum. Time is short, I am a visitor, and if I don't grab as much Torah as I can, I will end up with nothing. We should be permanently in the beis medresh, but with a sensation that we are a visitor, and every moment is precious.

The same can be said regarding teshuvah. The Beis Aharon says that רֹאֵה is roshei teivos for רֹאֵה אֵלּוּל הוֹלֵךְ, "See that Elul is going." We can explain that one must remember that Elul is "going." It is here now, but it will soon end and pass. Remember this, and take advantage of this time.

---

Fuming, he rushed to the man sitting at the front desk and said, "Is this hachnasas orchim? You didn't serve anything."

"Forget about that," the secretary said, "and just think about how orderly we are. Each department does its part. Weren't you impressed by our efficiency?"

The nimshal is that the primary part of teshuvah is to change. There are various other aspects of teshuvah. There is tefillah, Selichos, studying mussar, hearing drashos, etc. All these steps are essential, but the entire purpose is change, and everything is lacking if it doesn't result in change.

If one does teshuvah out of love for Hashem, all his aveiros turn into zechuyos. Reb Chaim Dovid Doctor (Bernhard) zt'l was a renowned baal teshuvah and tzaddik. As he lay on his deathbed, the Tiferes Shlomo zt'l visited him and heard Reb Chaim Dovid sigh. The Tiferes Shlomo assumed he was distressed over his early years when he was distant from Torah. The Tiferes Shlomo told him that he shouldn't worry about those days, יָמֵי הָרִאשֹׁנִים יָפִלוּ, the early days will fall away and become like nothing.

Reb Chaim Dovid Doctor replied, "Chas v'shalom! I am not mevater on one day." He didn't want to lose his past because he did teshuvah with love, thus turning his past faults into merits. As Chazal (Yoma 86:) say, "Teshuvah is great because sins committed intentionally become merits."

Perhaps this is the reason we say chapter (27) in Tehillim in Elul. We want to remember that even if we dwell in the beis medresh, we

should have the sensation that we are visiting, and time is precious. If we don't take advantage of the time we have, we will lose so much.