

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
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Naso





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Parshas Naso

One of the halachos of a *nazir* is that if he becomes *tamei*, he must do the entire *nazirus* over again. As it states, והימים הראשנים יפלו כי ממה נזרו "The first days fell away when he became *tamei*..." (6:12).

The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said that this halachah teaches us that when one fails in his resolves, he should simply start over and try again. As it states (*Mishlei* 24), שבע יפול צדיק וקם "a tzaddik falls seven times, and he gets up again..."

A great *rosh yeshivah* of our generation tells that as a *bachur*, he learned under the auspices of Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach *zt'l*, *rosh yeshivas* Kol Torah. Generally, he learned well, but there was a time when he had a drastic descent in Torah study. He simply wasn't able to sit and learn and concentrate, like he had before. He told Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach about his spiritual fall. Reb Shlomo Zalman gave him a *mashal*: Someone brought expensive material to a tailor and requested that he make a suit from it. The tailor began cutting the cloth at various angles. The man watched in horror. He shouted, "What are you doing? You're ruining the material! Do you know how much I paid for it?"

But then he saw that one piece became the collar, another piece became a sleeve...and a beautiful suit emerged. Reb Shlomo Zalman asked, "Could the tailor have made this suit without cutting the fabric? Of course he couldn't.

Cutting the material is part of the process of making a suit. It's also the procedure for the making of an *adom gadol*. The only way is to go through hard times. There will be moments when one feels that he is drifting away from his goal, but if he keeps on trying, all of these falls will help him in the end, and enable him to reach the greatness in Torah he's striving for."

Reb Yitzchak Hutner *zt'l* taught: Fools think that the *pasuk*, שבע יפול צדיק וקם is telling us about the stamina and greatness of the tzaddik who gets up again and again, even after falling seven times. However, wise people understand that the *pasuk* is explaining *how* the tzaddik reached his great levels. He reached his levels because he fell seven times. Even after falling so many times, he stuck to his resolve and returned to his *avodas* Hashem, and therefore he was able to climb so high.

The Be'er Mayim Chaim (*Noach* 8:1) writes, "Even when they fall, they are really going up, and not down. As it says, שבע יפול צדיק וקם. The seven descents are part of the וקם, getting-up. It can be compared to someone who desires to throw something high into the air. He bends down low and he lowers his hand and that enables him to throw the object higher and further. The same occurs when people fall... From the descents, they rise up to the heavens."

The path for growth is by falling and then trying again. The holy *sefarim* call

this *pasuk* רידה לצורך עליה, a descent for the sake of climbing even higher.¹

The Gemara (*Succah* 52) tells us that the *yetzer hara* has seven names: רע, ערל, טמא, שונא, מכשול, אבן, צפוני.

Reb Yitchak Blazer *zy'a* (in *Kochvei Or* p.157) explains that the *yetzer hara's* seven names correspond to the seven ways the *yetzer hara* lures people to sin. These seven approaches are alluded to in the *pasuk* שבע יפול צדיק וקם.

The seventh tactic is *צפוני*, which literally means hidden. This is when the *yetzer hara* conceals himself and tells us that an *aveirah* is a mitzvah. For example, "There is a mitzvah to make a *machlokes* on that person..." Or, "You are obligated by the Torah to stop learning..." and so on. The person doesn't realize that it was the *yetzer hara* speaking to him.

The *pasuk* tells us that the tzaddik falls for all seven ruses of the *yetzer hara*, including the difficult seventh one, *צפוני*, when he doesn't even know that he is being confronted by the *yetzer hara*. But after all these falls, וקם, he rises up again. He doesn't allow himself to remain in a fallen state.

By contrast, ורשעים יכשלו ברעה, "the sinners stumble with רע." The very first level and

name of the *yetzer hara* is רע. The *pasuk* is saying the *rasha* falls at that first level, and he never recovers. He gives up by his first fall and he doesn't try again.

This Generation

The tzaddikim of the Mishnah and of the Gemara were extremely cautious from sin. And they would fast and do a lot of *teshuvah* for the slightest infraction.

An example of this is Reb Elazar ben Azaryah. The Torah says (*Shemos* 23:12), למען ינוח שורך וחמורך, that also one's animals must keep Shabbos. For example, one mustn't let his animal carry things for him on Shabbos. Yet, the Mishnah (*Beitzah* 23.) says, פרתו יוצאה ברצועה בין קרניה "[Reb Eliezer ben Azaryah's] cow walked outdoors carrying a strap between its horns." The Gemara clarifies that it wasn't his cow. He never did this *aveirah*. His neighbor's cow was carrying the strap. The Mishnah calls it פרתו, Reb Elazar ben Azaryah's cow, because he knew about it, and he didn't rebuke his neighbor.

The Yerushalmi says that Reb Elazar ben Azaryah fasted many days to atone for that sin, until his teeth turned black.

When one see stories like this one, one wonders, how will I ever do *teshuvah*? As students asked the Arizal, "We have

1. The Gemara says, "A person doesn't understand Torah properly until he makes a mistake first" (*Gittin* 43). Also growth in *avodas Hashem* is achieved specifically through the process of elevating oneself again after the errors.

It is written (*Bereishis* 49:9), גור אריה יהודה... כרע רבץ כאריה ולביא "Yehudah is like a lion He crouches and lies low like a lion" The Chidushei HaRim *zy'a* explains that the greatness of Yehudah is that even after falling to the ground, he is still strong like a lion, ready to get up again.

many more sins than Reb Eliezer ben Azaryah. If he had to fast so many days to atone for a minor error, what will be with us and our many sins?"

The Arizal answered that in this generation it is much harder to serve Hashem than in the times of the Tana'im and Amora'im, because the world has become filled with *kelipos* and impurity. Therefore, the process of *teshuvah* has become much easier, and one becomes totally cleansed from sin.

The Arizal said this five hundred years ago. Since then, the world has been in a steady decline. Certainly today, even lesser measures of *teshuvah* atones for all our sins.

As the Yismach Yisrael (*Chanukah* 56) writes, "From the Arizal's generation until today, the *tzaros* and the *galus* have increased. Each day's problems are worse than the day before it. Therefore, surely today, when a Yid calls to Hashem from the depths of his heart, it will be very

precious to Hashem and equal to many fasts of the past."

The *avodas Hashem* of our generation is extraordinary, because it has become so hard to serve Hashem. Each and every one of our deeds is prized and cherished in Heaven.

Hashem told Moshe to count Levi's families: Gershon, Kehos, and Merari.

For Kehos, the Torah (4:2) says, נשא את ראש בני קהת.

For Gershon, the Torah says, נשא את ראש בני גרשון גם הם לבית אבותם למשפחותם.² The count is called נשא, which means to raise.

But for Merari, the *pasuk* says, בני מררי, למשפחותם לבית אבותם תפקוד אותם, "The children of Merari, to their families... count them" (4:29). This time, it doesn't say נשא. Why?

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* explains:

ג'רשון קהת ומררי represent three situations that Klal Yisrael experience. קהת (which means gather) is the glorious era of the

This perfectly describes Yehudah, who after the story of Tamar, admitted his sin and moved on. He didn't allow the situation to throw him into despair. This is the path *tzaddikim* take, and they thereby reach high levels.

2. Some explain this *pasuk*, נשא את ראש בני גרשון גם הם לבית אבותם, in the following way:

There are people who feel גרשון, banished and distant from *kedushah*. We should elevate them, and let them know just how precious they are. How do we do this? By showing them that גם הם לבית אבותם, that they too are Hashem's children

It's also written in this week's *parashah*, ביום השמיני נשיא לבני מנשה גמליאל בן פדהצור (7:54). Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zy'a* repeated in the name of Rebbe Dovid of Tolne *zy'a* the following interpretation: There are people who feel מנשה, forgotten (מנשה means forgotten, as in נשני אלקים). They think that because of their sins, they lost their connection with Hashem. The solution is, they should say גם לי א-ל, "I am also connected to G-d." They should believe that even in their present situation, Hashem is interested in them. When one does this, Hashem says, פדה צור, it is like you redeemed Hashem from *galus*.

Jewish nation, when Klal Yisrael lives together in Eretz Yisrael and gather for the *yomim tovim* in the Beis HaMikdash.

גרשון means banished, exiled. It represents times of *galus*. Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu *נשא*, to elevate the people of both of these situations, *למשפחותם לבית אבותם*, to their forefathers' levels.

Merari (which means bitter) refers to the generations that suffer bitterly. In addition to being exiled from their land, they also suffer from poverty, anti-semitism, etc. Merari's children were *מחלי ומושי*. *מחלי* means diseases, *מושי* means to move and to be exiled from place to place. Chazal (*Bava Basra 10*) say, "A *dor* of *shmad* (a generation when the goyim try to destroy them)—no creature can stand in their place (*במחיצתם*)". When the *galus* is so difficult, the Jewish nation is on the highest level. Therefore, the Torah doesn't say *נשא* in reference to Merari, because they are already at the highest levels.

As the Chasam Sofer writes, "Their forefathers are second to them," They don't need to be raised *לבית אבותם*.³

We are living in very difficult times, and yet, in a way, we are living in the nation's most glorious generation. Due to the hardships, each of our deeds is extremely dear to Hashem.

The Gemara (*Shabbos 112*) teaches, "If the first generations were like angels, we are like people. If the early generations were like people, we are like donkeys..." The world is in a decline. Each generation is lower than the generation that preceded it. However, the Bris Menuchah taught, we are now living in an era where the rules have changed. At the end of time, the generations become greater than they were in earlier times.

It isn't that we are on a higher level, because in all areas, we are on a much lower level than the tzaddikim of the past. But we are greater in one aspect. That is that we stand strong and loyal to

3. About Moshe it is written, *והאיש משה עניו מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה* (*Bamidbar 12:3*).

"Moshe Rabbeinu was the most humble person in the world." How did Moshe attain this great level of humility? He was aware that he was the only prophet who spoke to Hashem *פנים אל פנים*, face to face. He received the Torah. He was the leader of Klal Yisrael. So how could he possibly be the most humble person?

Rebbe Shalom Ber (ReSha'B) of Lubavitz *zy'a* answers that Moshe Rabbeinu saw the future generations, and that humbled him. Chazal say, Moshe Rabbeinu saw Adam HaRishon's *sefer*, in which all people who will be born and the things that would happen with them was listed. In this *sefer*, Moshe Rabbeinu saw the final generation. He discovered that in this era *hester panim* will prevail, and it will be very hard to recognize Hashem. Nevertheless, Yidden will be *moser nefesh* to keep the mitzvos, even then. When Moshe Rabbeinu saw this, he was humbled, and he attained his humility from there.

Hashem and his Torah despite the overwhelming *hester panim* and bitter hardships of *galus*. That makes us even greater than the tzaddikim of the past.⁴

perhaps Hashem desires that they serve Him from the darkness.⁵

The Yetzer Hara

The Chidushei HaRim zy'a said, chassidim make a mistake when they think that Hashem only wants them to serve Him on high levels. Because

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 88) tells us that when Hashem wanted to give the Torah to the Jewish people, the *malachim* in heaven protested, "Why should this

4. The Nesivos Shalom zy'a writes in a letter that there was a time when he was hospitalized and extremely ill. At this time, he found *chizuk* from the Chazal that says that the *Shechinah* hovers over the head of the sick.

He writes, "I felt that the Kosel Maaravi, the place where the *Shechinah* never leaves the Jewish nation, was above my head. This gave me strength to be strong." When people are ill spiritually or physically those are the times one can become closest to Hashem.

The *baalei Mussar* talk about a person that was once walking in the desert and saw another pair of footprints alongside his. "What's this?" he asked. A voice from heaven told him that these were Hashem's footprints. Hashem was walking together with him. He was overjoyed and comforted when he heard this.

Sometime later, he sees from the distance a lion approaching. He looks to the side, but there wasn't another pair of footprints. "Why did Hashem leave me just now, when I need Him most?"

The *bas kol* told him, "Until now, Hashem was walking by your side. Now, when your life is in danger, Hashem is carrying you. And the footprints you see are Hashem's."

5. A *sotah* woman who was suspected of sins drinks the *מי המרים*, the bitter waters. If she is guilty, these waters will cause her death. But if she is innocent, the water will bring her *brachos*. As Chazal say, "If she used to have a painful childbirth, she will have easy childbirth. If until now she had girls, she will have boys. If she had short children, now she will have tall children. If she used to give birth once every two years, she will give birth every year. If she used to have one child at a time, she will have twins. (*Midrash Rabba* 9:25, and see *Rashi* 5:28).

The Beis Yisrael zy'a asked, why should she receive all these *brachos*? She didnt act like the greatest *tzaddekes*. She wasn't brought to the Beis HaMikdash to drink the waters for nothing. Her deeds were a breach in *tznius*. Why should she gain when she drinks the waters? Let it be sufficient that she doesnt die.

The Beis Yisrael answers, if she was in this difficult test (because she was in a situation of *yichud*, etc.) and she still passed the test, she deserves to be rewarded.

We should avoid tests, as much as possible. But when we are tested, and the tests are extremely difficult, we will certainly earn immense reward and blessings when we pass those tests and overcome the *yetzer hara*.

precious and hidden treasure be given to human beings?"

Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to answer the angels.

Moshe Rabbeinu said, "What's written in the Torah? לֹא תַחַמְדוּ, 'Don't be jealous [of what belongs to others].' Is there jealousy among you? What else is written in the *Aseres HaDibros*? לֹא תִנְאֹף,

Do you have a *yetzer hara*?"

Hashem gave us the Torah *because* we have a *yetzer hara*. Some people think that due to their *yetzer hara*, they don't have a portion in the Torah. They look at their failures, their faults, and they think Hashem doesn't want them to serve Him. But just the opposite. The faults we have make us candidates for receiving the Torah. If it weren't for our human weaknesses, Hashem would have given the Torah to the *malachim*.

Shavuos, the שְׁתֵּי הַלֶּחֶם, two breads made from chametz, were sacrificed. Chametz represents the *yetzer hara*. The *yetzer hara* is important, since the *yetzer hara* gives us our rights to the Torah.

People look back on their life, and they see that unfortunately the *yetzer hara* has succeeded to cause them to lose many years. They acted improperly, in so many ways. They weren't devoted to Torah, *tefillah*, mitzvos, etc. But they shouldn't think that this means they don't have a portion in Torah, and that it is too late to

begin. Hashem purposely gave the Torah to people who have these tendencies.⁶

When we think about the Ten Commandments, we see clearly that the Torah was given to people who have a *yetzer hara*. We would assume that in the holy and unique moments of *mattan Torah* Hashem would tell the nation the secrets of kabbalah. But Hashem told them, "Don't kill. Don't steal. Don't be jealous..." The Torah was given to human beings, to people who have these tendencies and desires. Therefore, even these matters have to be spelled out.

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 88) says that when the Jewish people were standing at Har Sinai, Hashem raised the mountain above them, and said, "If you will accept the Torah, it is good. Otherwise, your graves will be here."

Tosfos asks, "They already said נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע, "we will do and we will listen." They already expressed their willingness and desire to keep the Torah. Why was it necessary to raise the mountain above their heads, and force them to accept the Torah?"

Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zy'a answered: The mountain represents the *yetzer hara* (as the Gemara says, "the tzaddikim see the *yetzer hara* appearing like a mountain.") At *mattan Torah* the impurity that the Yidden had, ceased. Chazal tell us, בַּמִּקֵּה זְהוּמָתָן, their impurity

6. There is a custom to decorate the beis medresh on Shavuos with trees that don't bear fruit. These trees imply that even lowly people, those who aren't producing any fruit, are special.

ceased. They became totally pure, and clean from the *yetzer hara*. But if everyone will be totally pure, there won't be a purpose. The purpose of *mattan Torah* is that people should have challenges, and still overcome the *yetzer hara*. Hashem therefore placed the mountain — the *yetzer hara* — over them, because that is the purpose of *mattan Torah*.

The Struggle

A happy winner of the lottery had to pick up the in person, so he hired a coach to take him to the lottery office, where he picked up many bags of gold coins. They loaded the bags onto the wagon and then began heading back. Somewhere along the way, the winner of this great wealth wanted to rest, so he asked the coachman to pull over to the side of the road to allow him to nap a bit. Soon both of them were sound asleep. When they awoke, and continued on their way, the wagon driver said, "We were robbed. The money isn't in the wagon anymore." "How do you know?" the passenger asked. "And since you know, it's a sign that you stole the money. Otherwise, how would you know?"

The driver explained, "Don't you see? The horses are running. If the wagon would be carrying the many gold coins, the horses wouldn't be able to run like this. That's how I know we were robbed."

This parable reminds us that when things go smoothly, the wealth isn't there. When things are difficult, that's when we can earn immense spiritual wealth.

Before *mattan Torah*, Hashem asked the nations of the world whether they want the Torah. They asked, "What is written in the Torah?" and Hashem told each nation the mitzvah that was hardest for them to keep.

Why did Hashem show them the hardest mitzvah? It is because this is the way of the Torah: It is hard to keep, due to our human tendencies and the *yetzer hara* — and that is what makes our *avodah* precious.

The Yidden standing at Har Sinai experienced intense fear. They said (*Devarim* 5:22-23), ועתה למה נמות כי תאכלנו האש הגדולה הזאת. אם יוספים אנחנו לשמוע את קול ה'Why should we die? This great fire will consume us. If we continue hearing Hashem's voice, we will die."

The Rebbe of Kobrin *zy'a* was speaking about these *pesukim* at his *tisch*, on Shavuos night. With immense *hislahavus*, he asked, "What were they afraid of? Isn't a close attachment to Hashem the greatest pleasure? Why should it bother them if they die from fear of heaven?"

He carried on and on, all fiery and passionate, until he fainted. His chasidim carried him back to his room.

The next day, at the *yom tov tisch*, the Rebbe of Kobrin answered his question:

The nation wouldn't mind dying by their attachment to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But they wanted to live *for Hashem's sake*, because they knew that Hashem wants them to live in this

‘world of tests’, and to fight and struggle with their *yetzer hara*.

Hashem replied (*Devarim* 5:25), היטיבו כל "Everything they said is good." The *Chumash* doesn't explicitly tell us that Hashem praised the nation when they said נעשה ונשמע, or at any other time. Only this time, when they said that they wanted to live. Because the nation perceived that their assignment of life is to have a *yetzer hara* with endless challenges, and to serve their Creator in this situation.

The Midrash tells us that Rome and Tzuria were two countries, one above the other. The king decreed that the people of both countries must remain within their borders. The people of the lower country couldn't go up, and the people of the higher country couldn't go down. One day, the king changed the law, and the borders were removed. The people from the country below may now go up, and those from above may go to the country below.

The king said, ואני המקדים, "I will be the first to cross the border."

The Midrash tells that the same thing happened at *mattan Torah*. There used to be boundaries. The Torah belonged up in heaven, people belonged down upon the earth; they couldn't blend. At *mattan Torah*, Hashem removed the boundaries and said, ואני המקדים, "I will come down first" and Hashem came down on Har Sinai.

What is this Midrash telling us?

Before *mattan Torah*, spirituality was in heaven, and materialism was on earth and they couldn't intermingle. The spiritual Torah belonged in heaven, and the place for human beings was on the earth. *Mattan Torah* changed the rules. The Torah came down to earth, and people can now live in this world full of challenges, and become sanctified like heavenly angels.

The Home

A first grade *melamed* was confronted with a problem; one of the students of his class was stealing. He first realized it when the children of his classroom began complaining that their snacks were missing. Then, the *melamed* noticed that other items were also missing — such as books, pens, toys. He started coming to the classroom when the children were out for recess, and he discovered the child who was responsible for the thefts. It was a sweet boy, Yochanan.

From all children, the *melamed* would never suspect Yochanan. This six-year-old had good *middos*, he behaved well in class, and as far as anyone could see, he was brought up in a warm, loving home.

The *melamed* called Yochanan's parents and told them.

The parents said that they were also noticing that items of their home — including money — were disappearing, and they said they would speak with Yochanan.

In their conversation with Yochanan, they discovered the root of the problem.

Yochanan shared a room with his grandmother. She wasn't permitted to eat sugar, but because of her old-age and failing mind, she didn't totally realize that. At nighttime, when no one was around, she would sneak into the kitchen, *steal* some sweets, and conceal them in her drawer. Later, when the elderly grandmother wasn't watching, the mother would secretly open up her drawers, and *steal* the snacks back.

Yochanan watched this happening each day. He saw his grandmother *stealing*, and he saw his mother *stealing* it back, and this is how he acquired this bad habit.

Children learn from what they see. Therefore, the home should be a place that teaches good deeds and values to the children. Parents send their children to good schools and think they've completed their obligation of *chinuch*. They've forgotten how influential the home is.

Before *vattan Torah*, Hashem said, כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל (Shemos 19). The women are called בית יעקב (see *Rashi*).

One can ask, if בני ישראל are the men, shouldn't the women be called בנות ישראל?

Why are they called בית יעקב?

We answer this question with a *mashal*:

Someone had a lot of phlegm in his throat; he couldn't even speak. Doctors told him that there were two remedies. One method is to take medicines, which will clear his throat. The other is to be in a heated room with many spices and incense. The fumes of the spices and incense, together with the heat of the room, will clear up his throat.

These are the two paths people can use to conquer the *yetzer hara*. One path is to take medicine, and that medicine is Torah study. As Chazal (*Kidushin* 30) say, "I created the *yetzer hara* and I created Torah as its remedy."⁷ But what should women do? They don't study Torah. They don't have this medicine.

They should use the second remedy: They need to be in a warm house, where good smelling incenses and spices permeate the atmosphere. In other words, girls should be raised in a warm and loving home permeated with the scents of Torah and *yiras shamayim*. They should experience the warmth of Yiddishkeit in their home. When they do, the *yetzer hara* will leave them. The *yetzer hara*, and all its inducements, cannot compete with the wonderful atmosphere of a Jewish home. All enticements of the *yetzer hara* will be ignored, because she has experienced something better.

7. When one studies Torah, he is cured from the influences of the *yetzer hara*. Chazal therefore say, אם פגע בך מנוול זה משכהו לבית המדרש... "If you are confronted with this disgusting [*yetzer hara*] draw him into the beis medrash. If the *yetzer hara* is hard like a stone, it will melt. If it is like iron, it will shatter" (*Sucah* 52). Torah is always the first and strongest remedy people should use to overcome the *yetzer hara*.

We now understand why the Torah refers to the women as *בית יעקב*, the house of Yaakov, because it is the house, filled with Torah and *yiras shamayim* that is so essential for women. This is their remedy against the *yetzer hara*.⁸

The Gemara (*Succah* 56) says, "A story happened with Miriam the daughter of Bilgah who was an apostate and married a Greek officer. When the Greeks came into the *heichel* of the Beis HaMikdash (to defile it, in the days of the Chashmona'im) she kicked the *mizbeiach* with her sandal and said, 'Lukos! Lukos! (Fox in Greek, referring to the *mizbeiach*). For how long will you devour the money of the Jewish people...?' When the *chachamim* heard about this [they punished her entire family]."

The Gemara asks, why must the entire family suffer if only one member sinned? The Gemara replies, "A child speaks in the marketplace what she hears from her father or mother." The *chachamim* understood that if Miryam bas Bilgah kicked and disgraced the *mizbeiach*, she must have acquired this attitude from her parents, therefore they too should be punished.

Her parents never kicked the *mizbeiach*, as Miryam bas Bilgah did, however, Miryam bas Bilgah's behavior let us know that her parents didn't value the *avodah* of the Beis HaMikdash. Her

father was a *cohen*; he served in the Beis HaMikdash, but his negative view influenced his family, and resulted in Miryam's disrespectful deed. Her parents therefore deserved to be punished together with her.

Children know a lot, and they know what is really important for their parents. If it is Torah and mitzvos, *emunah* and *yiras shamayim*, it is likely that he will follow and pursue these admiral goals, too.

Holding on to the Inspiration

In this week's *parashah*, the Torah lists the *korbanos* the *nesi'im* brought to dedicate the Mishkan. The Torah (7:84) writes, *זאת הנוכח המזבח ביום המשח אתו*, "This is the dedication of the *mizbeiach*, on the day it was anointed."

A few *pseukim* later, the Torah writes again, *זאת הנוכח המזבח אחרי המשח אתו*, "This is the dedication of the *mizbeiach* after it was anointed" (7:88). So which one was it; the *korbanos* for the dedication were brought *on the day* the *mizbeiach* was anointed, or were they brought *after* the *mizbeiach* was anointed? (*Rashi* 7:84 addresses this question.)

The *Imrei Emes zy'a* teaches that from these two terms: *on the day* – *after*, we derive that whenever one has a *day* of inspiration, he should make sure that this uplifted spirit will continue *afterwards* as well.

8. It is written, *כל שבח נעורים* and the Gemara derives from these words, *בית אביה* (Kiddushin 3). We can explain, it is the *בית אביה*, the father's home, permeated with Torah and *yiras shamayim*, which brings forth *כל שבח נעורים*, the goodness and the righteousness of the Jewish girls.

For example, we must seek to maintain the exalted atmosphere and uplifted aura of Shavuos also after Shavuos passes. A way to do that is by taking on a *kabalah* (resolution). That will ensure that at least some of the heights we attained will influence the future days, too.⁹

Chazal (*Pirkei Avos*) say, "Whoever has more wisdom than deeds, his wisdom doesn't last."

Inspiration is a form of wisdom; because inspiration means awareness of what is important in life. Now that he has more wisdom, he needs to increase his deeds, so his wisdom will last.¹⁰

The *rishonim* teach that the only mitzvah of the Torah whose basic composition is based on a miracle is the mitzvah of *sotah*. She drank from the waters, and if

she sinned, her punishment was immediately seen.

As the Rambam (*Sotah* 3:16) writes, "If the woman sinned, her face will immediately turn green, her eyes will pop out, and she will become filled with sinews (*gidim*). People will shout, 'Take her out! Take her out!' so she shouldn't contaminate the *ezras nashim* [of the Beis HaMikdash], and people will remove her from the *ezras nashim* where she was standing. Her stomach swells first, afterwards her legs fall, and she dies. At the very same time she dies, the man who sinned with her also dies, wherever he is..."

Open miracles were seen by the *sotah*; everyone saw that Hashem punishes those who sin.¹¹

9. Towards the end of the Imrei Emes's life, he said to his son, the Beis Yisrael zy'a, "When I was young, there were many sections of Torah that I wanted to learn, and I pushed it off for a later time. But now I can tell you that whatever one doesn't grab now isn't able to grab later."

The Chidushei HaRim zy'a taught: The longest *parashah* is *parashas Naso*. Similarly, the largest portion of Midrash and *Zohar* are also of *parashas Naso*. This is because *Naso* is generally studied immediately after Shavuos, after *mattan Torah*. There is an abundance of Torah, and therefore the *parashah*, the Midrash and the *Zohar* are longer.

In *Oz Yashir* we say, "The enemy says I will divide the *שלל*." *שלל* is *roshei teivos* for *לאהליכם*, "return to your tents" (*Devarim* 5:27). The enemy, the *yetzer hara*, tells people to return to their tents, to their old ways, to be as before. Although they had a moment of inspiration, he advises that they don't try to hold onto it.

The wise, however, do as it says in *Eishes Chayil*, *בטח בה לב בעלה ושלל לא יחסר*. In this *pasuk*, *שלל* refers to studying Torah. Even after the *yom tov* passes, they remain with the inspiration and with the passion for Torah that they received on Shavuos.

10. Chazal (*Succah* 52) say, "Whoever is greater has a greater *yetzer hara*." Those who were inspired on Shavuos, and have reached a higher level, must be more wary from the *yetzer hara*. Therefore, one must translate the inspiration into deeds and resolutions.

11. The Klausenberger Rebbe zy'a told the following story:

A husband brought his wife to the Chida and his *beis din* and told them of his suspicions.

Chazal (*Brachos* 63) tell us, "Why does the Torah discuss the laws of *nazir* after *sotah*? It is because whoever sees the *sotah* disgraced will become a *nazir* to refrain from wine [which leads to such sins]."

The Pri HaAretz asks, after seeing the miracles that happened to a *sotah*, and after seeing the severity of sin, we would assume that he would never need to take any precautions from sinning. Who desires to steer clear from sin, more than one who witnessed a *sotah* woman exploding and disgraced in public? From all people, why should he need to become a *nazir* to protect himself from getting drunk and sinning?

The answer is, after observing what happened to a *sotah*, his wisdom [his awareness] about the severity of sin was

increased. Chazal say, "Whoever has more wisdom than deeds, his wisdom doesn't remain," and Chazal say, "Whoever is greater than his friends, he has a greater *yetzer hara*." Therefore, after watching the *sotah's* disgrace, he must increase his deeds, or the inspiration will be lost.

The Midrash says, "Ben Zoma said, 'We found a *pasuk* that encapsulates the entire essence of the Torah. It is, 'שמע ישראל ד' אלקינו ד' אחד. Ben Nanas said, 'We found a *pasuk* that is even more encompassing. It is, 'ואהבת לרעך כמוך.' Shimon ben Pazi says, 'We found a *pasuk* that expresses even better the essence of the Torah. The *pasuk* is, 'את הכבש אחד תעשה בבקר ואת הכבש השני תעשה בין הערביים, 'One sheep is sacrificed in the morning [for the *korban tamid*] and the second sheep should be made in the afternoon' (*Bamidbar* 28:4).

He said that there was a *stirah* that his wife had become a *sotah*. The Chida said the husband should divorce her. The other judges of the court were surprised that the Chida was being so stringent, since there weren't *eidim* [witnesses], there was only the husband's accusation.

The Chida told the wife to accept the divorce willingly, but she answered the Chida with *chutzpah* and refused to accept a *get*.

The Chida told her, "I want you to listen to something," and he read to her the *parashah* of *Sotah*, written in the Torah (*Bamidbar* 5). When the Chida was halfway through reading, this woman began to leave. When the Chida read the words, 'ואת כי סטית...יתן ה' אותך לאלה... בתת, "and you who sinned Hashem will turn you into a curse and He will cause your leg to fall and your stomach will swell..." (*Bamidbar* 5:20), and the woman was walking up the stairs to leave the court room, her legs fell/buckled and her stomach swelled, just as it happened to the *sotah* in the Beis HaMikdash.

The Chida explained that when the woman and her husband were standing before him, he remembered the *brachah* he received from the Or HaChaim. The Or HaChaim blessed the Chida that he should have the *kedushah* of a *cohen*. He realized that there was a reason he remembered the Or HaChaim's blessings just then, and he decided to do that which a *cohen* does and administer the punishment for a *sotah*.

"Reb Ploni stood up and said, 'The *halachah* is like ben Pazi.'"

This Midrash is very difficult to comprehend. We can understand that שמע ישראל is the primary *pasuk* of the Torah, or that ואהבת לרעך כמוך is the cornerstone of the Torah, because *emunah* and *chesed* are foundations of the Torah. (The Maharal also says that ואהבת לרעך can be referring to loving Hashem who is called רעך (*Shabbos* 31:). But why is the *korban tamid*, which was brought twice daily, a cornerstone of the Torah? And why did the Midrash conclude that this *pasuk* expresses most clearly the essence of the Torah?

The Maharal (*Nesivos Shalom, Ahavas Rei'a* 1) answers that the *tamid* teaches us the value of serving Hashem constantly. Every day of the year, seven days a week without stop, the *tamid* was brought once in the morning and once in the afternoon. This קביעות, consistency, demonstrates that we are Hashem's slaves and servants. It proves that we are totally under Hashem's domain, and that *avodas Hashem* isn't something one does only when he feels like it. That is why

this is the primary *pasuk* of the Torah, because it expresses what it means to be an *oved Hashem*.¹²

Rising Early

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* taught that the entire day is influenced by how it begins. If one begins the day with *zrizus* and *avodas Hashem*, the entire day will follow in this direction. But if one begins the day with laziness, the entire day will have that sluggish imprint.

Rising early doesn't only add hours onto the day, it also creates a momentum that leads to success in life and in *avodas Hashem*.

Rebbe Yitzchak Eizik of Ziditchov *zy'a* taught that when one rises early in the winter, he should pray to Hashem, and his *tefillos* will be as effective as *tefillas Ne'illah* on Yom Kippur.¹³

Rebbe Yisrael of Rizhin *zy'a* taught (based on *Tehillim* 63): If a person will say to Hashem, קלי אתה, "You are my G-d" early in the morning, צמאה לך, and at that time he thirsts and yearns to have a connection with

12. When one does a good deed every day constantly (for example, he has set times for Torah, and he doesn't abandon it) then even if he is a simple person, he is cherished by Hashem.

The Midrash tells that 'Reb Ploni' told us that the *halachah* is like ben Pazi. The expression *Reb Ploni* isn't found in Chazal. Perhaps it is stated here, because it implies that regardless of who the person is, even if we call him Ploni, because his deeds aren't worthy that we should call him by name, if he does a good deed with קביעות, consistently, then he is considered equal to the *Tana'im* of the Mishnah.

13. Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zy'a* said in the name of *tzaddikim*, that after *birkas HaTorah* is an *eis ratzon*, an auspicious time for *tefillah*. One should pray for success for that day, and he will merit it. This is a tested and proven *segulah* (בדוק ומנוסה).

Hashem, then, בארץ ציה ועיף בלי מים, even if during the day, when due to his work and obligations he is involved in worldly matters, בן בקודש הזיתך, the spiritual influence from the morning will remain with him throughout the day.

The Shevet Mussar (27) writes, "One should be *zariz* to get out of bed quickly and to go to the *beis knesses*. He should think: 'If someone would tell me that there is a fire in the house, wouldn't I awaken immediately because I'm afraid of being burned? It is true that it's winter, it's cold, it's raining, and sleep is so sweet, but I must save my life.' He will immediately jump out of bed to save himself. Though, even if he gets burnt, it would only be the body, and not the soul.

"*Kal vechamor* one shouldn't be lazy in the morning. He should rise to serve Hashem, to save his body and soul from Gehinom, from the fire that never extinguishes. He shouldn't pay attention to the cold, to the sweetness of sleep, and not to anything..."

The Shevet Mussar continues, "If you were sleeping and a murderer arrives with a drawn sword, wouldn't you get up immediately? You wouldn't even take a moment to think it over. Therefore, think this: If you will not awaken early to go and daven, the angel of death's sword is pointed at you, and you have nowhere to escape..."

The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (1:4) writes, "Every person who fears Hashem must be strong to overcome the *yetzar hara*. Don't listen to him [when he tells you to sleep longer]. Even if it is hard for you, your body is heavy, and you are lazy, focus on doing the will of the King of kings, Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Contemplate the following: 'If I had a business meeting early in the morning, which could earn me a nice profit...wouldn't it be easy for me to rise early, to earn the money? Or, I had to work for the king; wouldn't I awaken on time, so the king doesn't have any complaints on me, and so I can find favor in the king's eyes?' Certainly then, to serve the King of kings, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, one should awaken immediately... And if you try, Hashem will help you (*Shabbos* 104)."

And it really isn't all that hard. The first few times it is hard to wake up and get out of bed right away, but then it becomes easy. As the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* writes, "When one wakes up immediately four or five times, it won't be difficult afterwards."

Practice proves that this is true. If one forces himself to awaken three, four, or five days in a row, afterwards it will be easy for him to rise and to get out of bed. And then he will earn the great benefits of rising early to serve Hashem.