

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Shelach





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Torah Wellsprings - Shelach

The Meraglim Lacked Bitachon

The Rebbe of Piazeszna zt'l (אש קודש) teaches, "When a person doesn't see any opening or path which seem possible using his *sechel* and according to the rules of nature, that can save him from his troubles and predicaments, he should place his trust in Hashem and increase his *emunah* and *bitachon*."

He said this in the Warsaw Ghetto to the people who wanted to escape but didn't see any way possible to do so.

He said, "At times like these, it is better that one shouldn't seek to save himself via natural means because he probably won't find them, and then his *bitachon* will become weaker. Rather, one should say... 'Hashem is above the laws of nature and He will save me.'"

The *meraglim* (spies) told the Jewish nation that there are giants living in the land of Eretz Yisroel and their cities are heavily fortified. The Yidden understood, correctly, that according to the rules of nature, it was impossible for them to win this war. So, they began to panic.

Kalev silenced the nation and told them that Hashem will help them. As it states, ויהם כלב את העם אל משה ויאמר עלה נעלה וירשנו אתה כי יכול נוכל לה, "Kalev silenced the nation...and said, 'We

will go up. We will inherit the land because we can.'"

The Piazeszna zt'l takes note that Kalev didn't explain to them how they could conquer the land, because he didn't know. But he was certain that Hashem can do anything. We can therefore trust in Him, and He will save us.

The Piazeszna zt'l teaches that everyone should think this way. Whenever one finds himself in a difficult situation where a path to salvation seems hopeless, he should tell himself, "Hashem can save me, and He is above the rules of nature. I don't have to see how. I trust in Him."¹

It shouldn't have been hard for the Yidden to believe that Hashem will help them conquer Eretz Yisrael in miraculous ways. It wouldn't be the first miracle Hashem performed for them. Just a year and five months before,² Hashem saved them from Mitzrayim with many, wondrous miracles. They lived in the desert where they ate manna that fell from heaven and they drank water that gushed forth from a stone. They were protected by the clouds of glory. They witnessed the miracles of *matan Torah*. They weren't strangers to miracles. So why was it hard for them to believe that Hashem would give them Eretz Yisrael with miracles?

1. The Sfas Emes (תרל"א ד"ה ולא) writes, "My grandfather, the Chidushei HaRim zt'l, said, "As far as they understood, it was impossible for them to conquer Eretz Yisrael. But if they would believe in Hashem... the belief, itself, would help them go above the boundaries of nature... [and they would be able to conquer Eretz Yisrael]."

It states (*Tehillim* 121:1), אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא עזרי, "I raise my eyes to the mountains; from where will come my salvation?" The chapter refers to a person who doesn't see any hope on the horizon. He doesn't see any solutions for his troubles. But, עזרי מעם ה' עושה שמים וארץ, "My help will come from Hashem, Who created heaven and earth." Hashem created heaven and earth from nothingness, יש מאין, and He can also find, and, if need be, create, a solution for me.

2. They left Mitzrayim on 15 Nisan, and the story of the *meraglim* was a year later, on Tisha b'Av.

The Sifsei Tzaddikim (from Rebbe Pinchas Madinovitz *zt'l*) replies, "They sullied their souls with several sins: the golden calf, the *מַתְאוּנִים*, and others, and they were convinced that they didn't deserve any more *nissim* from Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

This was their mistake! They forgot that Hashem always loves His nation.

The Sifsei Tzaddikim explains that Hashem commanded, *שלח לך אנשים* - send spies into Eretz Yisrael, because Hashem wanted the nation to hear about the giants living there and about the fortified cities, so that they should know that even after their severe sins, Hashem will perform miracles for them. His attachment and love to them remains intact, forever. But the nation became afraid, and the opportunity was lost.

As the Sifsei Tzaddikim writes, "Hashem told them to send *meraglim*...so they would see the giants living there and they will know that they can't win the wars according to nature. And, nevertheless, they will enter the land and they will be granted Eretz Yisrael. This would teach them that Hashem always has compassion on His children. He makes miracles for them because of His love for them."

Miracles for the Mitzvos

There are times when we want to do very good deeds, but we think that it is impossible. However, just as Hashem performs miracles for our physical needs, Hashem performs miracles to help us attain our spiritual dreams, too. Therefore, don't be afraid. If you want to accomplish a lot, Hashem will grant you *siyata dishmaya* beyond the rules of nature so you can reach your goals.

We are forbidden to wear *shatnez*, which is a garment made from linen and wool threads. The *sefarim* explain that linen and wool represent opposing strengths and isn't good when they are mixed together. But in *tzitzis*, they can be interwoven together. As Chazal say, *shatnez* is permitted in *tzitzis*.

We can learn a lesson from this. This halachah hints to us that when it comes to performing a mitzvah, opposing strengths shouldn't deter us. Even when there is opposition, we can still accomplish Hashem's will.

It states (15:39), *וראיתם אותו וזכרתם את כל מצות ה'*, *ועשיתם אותם*, "And you will see the *tzitzis* and you will remember all of Hashem's mitzvos, and you will perform them..."

We can explain: *וראיתם אותו*, see the *tzitzis* and learn from them that you are able to overcome opposition and challenges. *וזכרתם אותם*, *את כל מצות ה'* *ועשיתם אותם*, with this awareness in mind, you will be able to keep all the mitzvos.

Because, just as Hashem performs miracles to give us *parnassah*, health, a roof over our heads and so much more, Hashem also performs miracles to enable us to keep the mitzvos.

The Ponovizher Rav *zt'l* once came to Radin to speak to the Chofetz Chaim *zt'l*. The Ponovizher Rav wanted this to be a short visit, because he had another train to catch. But the Chofetz Chaim spoke to him for a very long time and the Rav missed the train. Later, the Ponovizher Rav heard that the train he hoped to catch derailed and many people died. His life was saved, because the Chofetz Chaim spoke with him at length.

The Ponovizher Rav said about this incident: "It isn't that the Chofetz Chaim had *ruach hakodesh* at this time and knew that the train will get derailed. Rather, it's because Heaven places into the mouth of an *ehrlicher* Yid the words he should say, at the right time." Because when a person truly desires to do Hashem's will, Hashem helps him succeed.

Once, the Chofetz Chaim asked the Ponovizher Rav, "How many hours did you dedicate to Torah study today? Was it two hours? Perhaps three hours? I studied hundreds of hours today. This is because I have a yeshiva, where there are many *bachurim* studying Torah! I have a portion in

all their Torah studies, so it is like I studied for hundreds of hours!"

At that time, the Ponovizher Rav was considering closing his yeshiva, because he was having a hard time raising the funds. But Hashem placed into the Chofetz Chaim's mouth the words that the Ponovizher Rav needed to hear. This conversation encouraged him to keep the yeshiva open, despite the hardships it entailed.

The Chofetz Chaim sought to help people with his conversations, and Hashem helped him succeed, sometimes in supernatural ways. Similarly, when a person desires to excel in a certain area of avodas Hashem, Hashem will give him the *siyata dishmaya* he needs to succeed.

Bitachon

The *meraglim's* sin was that they lacked *bitachon*. They didn't trust that Hashem would help them conquer Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, we will discuss the essential topic of *bitachon*:

In 5663 there was a fire in Radin; two hundred houses burned down. The fire stopped just before the Chofetz Chaim's home. His house didn't catch fire, and neither did the twenty-six houses after his.

Soon after the fire, insurance agents were going from house to house in Radin, selling fire insurance policies. The Chofetz Chaim wasn't home when the agents came to his home, and his family bought a policy. When the Chofetz Chaim heard about it, he was upset. He wanted to be protected from fire through *bitachon* alone. In his opinion (others disagreed) buying fire insurance is a lack of *bitachon*.

A year later, after Pesach, there was another fire in Radin. This time, the Chofetz Chaim's home burned down, and so did the homes of his married children. The family

said, "Baruch Hashem we insured our homes! If we hadn't, we would be in trouble."

The Chofetz Chaim disagreed. He said, "If we didn't insure the houses, it would have been better. Our homes wouldn't have burned down. The proof is that last year, when we didn't insure the houses, nothing happened. The fire stopped before reaching our home."

The Alter of Navardok *zt'l* had a small hut in the forest where he studied Torah and *mussar*. One night, his lamp blew out and he needed more oil. He told himself, "If Hashem desires, He can send me someone with oil. Everything is possible..." in order to fulfill his *hishdallus* he opened the door of his hut.

Just then, a man walked by. The Alter asked him whether he had oil. He did, and the Alter was able to study Torah and *mussar* for the rest of the night.

In the morning, he put out the lamp, and decided to save the oil, so he would remember the miracle that happened to him.

But once, there was a fire in his home, and the oil was consumed in the fire. The Alter said, "I'm happy that happened. Why should I remember this miracle more than all the other miracles Hashem performs for me all the time?"

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 7:) teaches that when a city is collecting taxes to build a wall around itself for protection or to buy weapons, *talmidei chachamim* aren't obligated to participate. They study Torah, and the merit of their Torah and good deeds protects them. They don't need a wall or weapons for protection.

The Chazon Ish says that we can explain the Gemara in the following way:

Torah study trains people to have *bitachon*, and those who have *bitachon* don't need those means of protection. They are protected with their *bitachon*!³

3. The Chazon Ish would often say, "Hashem helps the moment a person doesn't see any natural means for his salvation."

The Kedushas Levi *zt'l* (*Beshalach*, ר"ה והנה ידוע) writes, "It states, 'ר' זלך, 'Hashem is your shadow.' The Baal Shem Tov explained: Just as a shadow copies every move a person makes, similarly, *keviyachol*, Hashem treats the person in accordance to the way he acts. If a person performs deeds of compassion, Heaven will bestow compassion on him.... If he has *bitachon* (he trusts that Hashem will give him all his needs) Heaven will do so too. But if a person is constantly worried about his *parnassah* and about the *parnassah* of his family, Heaven will not give him *parnassah*. Therefore, fortunate are those who don't forget Hashem, and they trust in Him. By doing so, Hashem will be their shadow, and Hashem will prepare their *parnassah* for them...."

The Minchas Elazer *zy'a* would tell the following story whenever he visited the sick:

The Kedushas Levi was once very ill, and his students were in the next room, saying *Tehillim*. Suddenly, they heard a loud sound. They went into the Rebbe's room and found him lying on the floor. Apparently, he fell off his bed. They lifted him and returned him to his bed.

Some hours later, the Rebbe called his students and asked for a cup of tea, which was a sure sign of improvement. A little while afterward she was standing on his feet, totally well.

He told his students, "As I was lying on my bed, I reminded myself how my Rebbe, the Magid of Mezritch, explained the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 32), 'הבטח בה' חסד יסובבנו, 'For the person who trusts in Hashem, kindness surrounds him.' The Magid explained that this isn't a *segulah*, it is a rule of nature. Whoever trusts

in Hashem, he becomes enveloped in Hashem's kindness.

"So, I strengthened myself with *bitachon*, until I felt confident that Hashem would heal me. I got out of bed, but I fell to the ground. I realized that my *bitachon* wasn't perfect yet. So, I began thinking about *emunah* and *bitachon* some more, until I became perfectly healthy."

Accepting Hashem's Will

The Beis Avraham *zt'l* once said, "It's a good thing to want to learn and to desire to daven. But to want what the Ribono Shel Olam desires, that is something else entirely." Hashem has a plan for every person. For many people, Hashem's plan is that they must work many hours a day, grab a brief Torah *shiur* in the morning and at night, and to daven the best they can in the small slot of time set aside for *tefillah*. It is good to want more Torah and more *tefillah* – and you should pray for more – but at the same time, be satisfied with your lot. Believe that Hashem knows what's best for you and if this is your fate, then it is surely the best situation for you.

The Beis Avraham *zt'l* writes that this idea is alluded to in the song *י"ה אכסוף* – which can be translated, *פתח להם נועם ורצון*, open their hearts so that they should want *שערי רצונך*, what You want.

One of the chassidim of the Birchas Avraham of Slonim *zt'l* had to be in America for Rosh Hashanah. He wrote a letter to his Rebbe, expressing his distress that he wasn't able to be with his Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah.

The Birchas Avraham wrote back, "Wherever a Yid is, Hashem prepares a

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* writes in a letter, "I don't feel that it's important to ask people for help many times. I follow the Chofetz Chaim's counsel. He would often say, 'From a human being, one doesn't ask often.' Because what is man? Only Hashem can help."

Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmistrifka *zt'l* explained: *תשועת ד' בהרף עין*, when people have *הרף עין*, which means they stop looking to people for help, that is when they receive *תשועת ד'*, Hashem's salvation.

ladder for him, from which he can reach the heaven. For example, Yosef HaTzaddik's ladder was in the impure land of Mitzrayim. From there he reached his great levels. Now that you must be in America for Rosh Hashanah, know that Hashem prepared for you a very tall ladder over there. It is placed in the depths of the ground and it rises all the way up to the highest levels. Therefore, accept your situation with love and joy."

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* writes, "The *meraglim* [who discouraged the Yidden from going to Eretz Yisrael] had the good of Bnei Yisrael in mind. They saw that the Yidden were living in a very ideal setting. Moshe Rabbeinu was their teacher; clothes and food were free; and everyone was involved in *avodas Hashem*. The *meraglim* felt that it was a shame that Klal Yisrael shouldn't continue benefitting from this ideal lifestyle. Why should they come to Eretz Yisrael, and need to toil the land, and be left without much time for Torah and *tefillah*? The *meraglim* knew that they were sinning, but they did so anyway. They risked their souls for the benefit of the Jewish nation. Their strategies were successful because the Jewish nation remained in the desert for forty extra years...

"Nevertheless, this wasn't Hashem's will. And it isn't correct to offer advice to Hashem, because we can assume that whichever way Hashem leads us is for our benefit... Their sin was that they came up with this idea on their own. They should have trusted in Hashem's *hanhagah*." Hashem knows what's truly good for us, and if it is His plan that we should be busy with *parnassah* for many hours a day, then that is His will. Don't think you are smarter than Hashem and that you can arrange a more ideal program of *avodas Hashem*. The plan that Hashem wants for you is the best for you.

Yesurim

Part of accepting Hashem's will is to accept *yesurim* (afflictions). One might think that "things would be so much better if I didn't have to endure these hardships. I

would serve Hashem so much better if I didn't have these problems." However, since Hashem gave you these *yesurim*, believe that this is the best situation for you. You can pray for them to go away, but also be aware and thankful that Hashem has designed your struggles specifically for you, to bring out your strengths.

There are many benefits, one gains from *yesurim*:

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* (*Kobetz Igros* 201) writes, "*Yesurim* are beloved to the person who sees them like messengers sent by Hashem to strengthen one's connection with his Creator and to bring him to a world that is solely light, exalted above all *gashmiyus*... Fortunate is his lot."

Also, Michtav MeEliyahu (vol.1 p.84) writes, "My rebbe, Reb Tzvi Hirsh Broide *zt'l*, said a nice *mashal* on this subject:

Imagine being forced to stand on a busy street corner, and you must take off people's shoes, measure their feet, and give them a new pair of shoes. That would be terribly humiliating. However, in a shoe store, the owner does this all day long, willingly and happily. What's the difference? The answer is: The shoe store owner is earning *parnassah* for each pair of shoes that he sells.

So too, when one understands that *yesurim* are for his ultimate good, he will be happy with them..." They are painful, they are humiliating, but if he is benefitting from them, he should be happy with them.

The Sifri (see *Devarim* 32) states, "As long as a person is living a tranquil life, his sins aren't atoned for at all. But through *yesurim*, he becomes desired by Hashem."

The Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (*Rabba* 23) states, "Whoever...is happy with *yesurim*, this will grant him life in this world and in the next world, which is eternal."

The Gemara (*Taanis* 8.) states, "Whoever is happy with his *yesurim*, he brings salvation to the world."

The Rabbeinu Yonah (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 2:4) teaches that one should praise Hashem for his *yesurim*, as it states, צרה ויגון אמצא ובשם ה' אקרא, "I suffer agony and distress and I praise Hashem," because the *yesurim* are for his good.

The Ben Ish Chai *zt'l* (*Ben Yohoyada*) says that it is very hard to be happy with *yesurim*, but there is a thought to keep in mind, which makes it easier. Think about how the *yesurim* is really for a short time, and because of them - the *yesurim*, he will earn eternal good. With this thought in mind, he can try to reach a level of *simcha* even though he has *yesurim*.

The Ben Ish Chai writes, "He is happy because he realizes that the י (the woe and hardships) are only שעה, for a short time. And then he will merit salvation. ישועה י שעה. With a moment of woe, one merits salvation."

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 16:) states, "An *ayalah* (female deer/hind) has a narrow womb, and when she crouches down to give birth, Heaven sends a snake to bite her." The bite opens her womb, so she can give birth.

Even though the snake helps the hind, they aren't friends. They are archenemies. As the Chovas HaLevavos (*Bitachon* 3) states, "The *ayalah*'s nature is to prey on snakes." Similarly, the Midrash (*Shochar Tov*, *Tehillim* 22) states: "If there's a house that has many snakes, one should bring a hind's horn and smoke it. The snakes will run away immediately." Esther is called אילת, a hind, because she banished the snake, Haman HaRasha, from Achashveirosh's home."

We are informed through these sources that the *ayalah* and the snake are enemies. We can be certain that when the snake bites the *ayalah* it isn't because the snake wants to help her. The snake strikes the *ayalah* out of anger and a desire to take revenge. The snake thinks it is killing the *ayalah*; it doesn't realize that it is helping the *ayalah*. If the snake didn't bite the *ayalah*, she and her child would die in labor. The snake unknowingly saves their lives.

Let us learn two lessons from this:

One lesson is, when something bad happens to you, believe that it is for your good.

The second lesson is meant for the snake, and for all those who want to harm their fellow man. The counsel we give them is "don't try." It is foolish to take revenge because you end up doing them the best favors. A snake can attempt to take revenge on the *ayalah* but ends up doing her the best favor. If it wouldn't bite the *ayalah* she would die during labor, and eventually, all hinds and deer would be extinct. By trying to take revenge, they only harm themselves.

What Others Think

The *meraglim* told Klal Yisrael about the giants who lived in Eretz Canaan. They said (13:33), ונהי בעינינו כחגבים, "We felt like grasshoppers, וכן היינו בעיניהם, and that is how they perceived us."

The Midrash states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu forgave them for saying 'We felt like grasshoppers,' but Hashem didn't forgive them for saying 'וכן היינו בעיניהם, 'And that's how they perceived us.' Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, 'How do you know which impression I made them have of you? Perhaps they thought you were angels?'"

This is a very important lesson. Many people have a negative self-image. They think everyone looks down at them. Other people's opinion is very important to them, and when others think negatively of them, it hurts them immensely. But one never knows what others are thinking. Perhaps Hashem put into their hearts to look up at them and to consider them special. Perhaps they consider them to resemble *malachim*.

If you think people are looking up at you (and that they consider you as a *malach*) you will be cautious with your deeds, because you will want to maintain your reputation. But if you think people are looking down at you

and they disregard you, this can lead you to act in improper ways.

Therefore, it is important to have a healthy self-esteem, and to feel that others are looking up at you, because then you will be cautious to act properly.

Moshe told the *meraglim*, והתחזקתם, "strengthen yourselves..." They had to strengthen themselves and to think better of themselves.

The Gemara (*Sotah* 35.) states that the *meraglim* heard the Canaanites say, "We see people that look like ants, crawling in the vineyards." The Sfas Emes (תר"ם) asks: these words tell us that they actually heard the Canaanites talking down at them and thinking of them as insects. So why does the Midrash rebuke them for saying, בן היינו בעיניהם, "That is how they perceived us"?

The Sfas Emes answers that the problem began with their negative self-perception. This influenced others to look at them with negativity. "They were small in their own eyes, they considered themselves to be like grasshoppers, and this caused others to see them in that w."

Had they believed in themselves and had they considered themselves special, the Canaanites would have had greater respect for them, too. But the *meraglim* looked down at themselves, and this caused others to perceive them in this light.

The Rebbe of Kotzk zt'l (*Emes v'Emunah* 496) has an opposite explanation to the *meraglim*'s sin. Their fault was that they *cared* about the impression they made on the Canaanites. It bothered them that the Canaanites thought of them as insects. "Their main error was that they added בעיניהם, 'This is how we appeared to them.' Why should a person care how others think about him? ... Follow the correct path, according to your level and abilities, and don't look back [to see what others are saying]. Why do other people's opinion make a difference to you...?"

When one seeks the admiration of others, he is exposing himself to befriending bad people. But when one is clear with what he wants to do, and he doesn't need the approval of others, he will do what he knows he should, and he seeks good friends, only.

It states at the beginning of the *parasha*, שלח לך אנשים. The Rebbe of Kotzk translates it: "Send away *menschlichkeit*." This is because there is an accepted, social norm that people try to follow. However, this "normal" behavior sometimes contradicts the laws of the Torah. The Torah is hinting to us, שלח לך אנשים, throw away your need to be human and normal when Hashem wants something else from us. Don't care about what other people are saying about you, because your concern should be to find favor in Hashem's eyes.

Tefillah

At the beginning of the *parashah*, the Torah lists the names of the *meraglim*: למטה ראובן שמוע בן זכור, למטה שמעון שפט בן חורי, "For Reuvan's tribe the spy was Shamua ben Zakur... For Shimon's tribe the spy was Shofot..." The Arizal teaches that the *meraglim* were being sent on a most difficult and dangerous mission, for it was likely that they would end up sinning – which they did. To protect them from falling into the trap of sins, the neshama of the head of each tribe went along with them. This means Reuvan's *neshamah* came to שמוע בן זכור to help him succeed. Shimon's *neshamah* attached itself to שפט בן חורי, and so on.

Yosef's tribe was divided between Efraim and Menashah. Who would Yosef join? The *pasuk* states, למטה יוסף למטה מנשה גרי בן סוסי, "For the tribe of Yosef, the tribe of Menasheh: גרי בן סוסי." Yosef's *neshamah* went to Menashah's tribe. Efraim's tribe sent Yehoshua, as it states, למטה אפרים הושע בן נון, but Yosef's *neshamah* didn't go with him. Who would protect Yehoshua from sinning?

To solve this problem, Moshe prayed specifically for Yehoshua. Yehoshua needed *tefillos* more than the others because he didn't

have the holy *neshamah* of the *shevatim* accompany him on the mission.

All the *meraglim* besides for Yehoshua had the *neshamah* of the head of their tribe coming along to protect them from sins, and Yehoshua had Moshe's *tefillos*.

Which was more influential: the attachment of the holy *neshamos* from the holy *shevatim* or Moshe's *tefillos*? In retrospect we see that *tefillah* was stronger. Moshe prayed for Yehoshua: "י"ה וישעך מעצת מרגלים", "May Hashem save you from the *meraglim*'s ideas," and Yehoshua didn't sin. Kalev prayed for himself, as Chazal (*Sotah* 34:) state, "Kalev went to [Mearas HaMachpeilah and] prayed at the *kevarim* of our forefathers, אבותי בקשו עלי, רחמים שאנצל מעצת רשעים", "Fathers, pray for me that I should be saved from the influence of the *resha'im*!" and he also didn't sin. So, we see that those who had *tefillos* were protected from sin, whereas those who only had the attachment of the holy *shevatim* ended up sinning and failing the difficult mission of the *meraglim*.

This teaches us the special power of *tefillah*.

Rebbe Henoch of Alexander *zt'l* said that Yehoshua was always saying 'הושע הושע, אבא ה', הושיעה נא, "Save me Hashem! Save me! Please, Hashem, save me now!" Therefore, Moshe said 'הושע, "Hashem will save you. Because of your continuous prayers, I am certain Hashem will save you."

It states (*Mishlei* 21:30), אין חכמה ואין עצה ואין תבונה, נגר ה'. Rebbe Moshe Kobriner *zt'l* explained that אין, in Yiddish, means one. The *pasuk* is saying, "There is one counsel that everyone must follow. That piece of advice is: נגר ה', to pour your heart out in prayer before Hashem.

Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa *zt'l* taught, "The advice for a Yid who doesn't want to lack anything and wants to be attached to Hashem is to accustom himself to pray to Hashem for important matters, as well as for trivial things. Don't think that you have to be in *hisbodedus*, all alone, wearing a tallis and tefillin, in order to pray. Wherever you

are, even in the marketplace, you can pray to Hashem. And Hashem, Who is שומע תפילת כל פה, will certainly answer your *tefillos*."

The Malbim (*Tehillim* 100:2) writes, "When one asks for something from a human being, he asks with tears in his eyes and he cries and shouts. [He isn't happy when he is pleading.] He is only happy afterwards when he receives what he asked for. But when one requests something from Hashem, he asks with joy, because he is certain that Hashem will give him what he wants." The Malbim says that this is the meaning of the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 100:2), באו לפניו ברננה, "Come before Hashem with joy." When one comes before Hashem in prayer, he is joyous, because he knows his requests will be fulfilled.

To explain the necessity of *tefillah*, Reb Yechezkel Leinstein *zt'l* told the following:

I saw a group of *talmidei chachamim* studying Torah with all their energy. One of the scholars was toiling over a section from Reb Akiva Eiger *zt'l*. When he understood it, he told it to his friends, and they were all very happy with it. They felt like they just received a million dollars.

One of the *yungerleit* went to the grocery, where he had a large bill to pay, and said that he wants to pay his bill with Reb Akiva Eiger's *chiddush*. He added that he also wants change, because this *chiddush* is worth a million, which is much more than what he owes.

The grocer looked at him as though he was crazy and said, "Your *chiddush* is certainly worth a million dollars, but in this store people pay with money, and not with *chiddushei Torah*."

Reb Yechezkel explained that although Torah study is the highest level, *tefillah* is what gets you what you need. Each mitzvah has its *segulah* and place, and to get one's needs, one needs *tefillah*.

Honor Your Fellow Man

The Torah writes (15:39), *והיה לכם לציצית... וזכרתם*, "It will be for you tzitzis...and you will remember all of Hashem's mitzvos." How does tzitzis remind us of the mitzvos?

Rashi writes, "The *gematriya* of *ציצית* is 600. There are eight strings and five knots. Together, that's 613." That is how looking at the tzitzis reminds us of the 613 mitzvos.

The Ramban (15:32) writes, "I didn't understand this Rashi, because *ציצית* is written without the second *י"ד*, and is only *gematriya* 590..." It isn't *gematriya* 600.

Some answer that since we read it as though there were two *י"ד*s in *ציצית*, the second *י"ד* can be included in this *gematriya* (see *Sifsei Chachamim*).

Rebbe Chench of Bendin *zt'l* answers that whenever there is one *י"ד*, Yid, there is another *י"ד*, Yid, with him because a Yid is never alone. Because of the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisrael*, Yidden are always together, caring for each other. So if one *י"ד* is mentioned in the *pasuk*, automatically another Yid is certainly there too, and then we have a *gematriya* of 600.

Using another approach, Rebbe Chanoch of Bendin answers that the *י* is counted as though it was spelled out in full: *י"ד*, those three letters are *gematriya* 20. Thus, the *gematriya* of *ציצית* is indeed 600. The reason we count the *י"ד* as though it was spelled out is because the essence of a Yid is his inside. It isn't his externals that are unique, it's his inside [his heart, his devotion] that really count. That is why we count the *miluy* [the inside letters, which represent the] inside of a Yid.

A lesson in *ahavas Yisrael* is also seen in how the Torah lists the *meraglim*. The

Ramban takes note that Efraim's *shevet* is stated first (see 13:8), and three *pesukim* later Menasheh's tribe is mentioned (see 13:11). Why aren't they listed together, they are both descendants of Yosef?

Furthermore, the Torah writes that Menasheh is from Yosef, but the Torah doesn't write here that Efraim is from Yosef. What is the reason for these differences?

The Ramban (*Bamidbar* 1:32) writes, "We can explain that...it is because the Torah wants to give honor to both of them." Menasheh is honored because he is attributed to Yosef, and Efraim is honored because he is mentioned first.

This is a lesson in *ahavas Yisrael*. The Torah sought to give honor to Efraim and to Menasheh, each in his own way. Similarly, everyone must seek to honor his fellow man, and make him feel respected and honored.

Tzitzis

This week's *parashah* discusses the wonderful, holy mitzvah of tzitzis, so let us take a moment to study the *Shulchan Aruch* and the *Mishnah Berurah* (which I brought in the footnotes), which discuss the uniqueness of this mitzvah.

Shulchan Aruch (24):

(1) "If a person isn't wearing a four-cornered garment, he isn't obligated in tzitzis. But it is proper that one should wear a *talis katan* all day long, so he will remember the mitzvos at every moment.⁴ The tzitzis have five knots, representing the five books of the Torah, and there are four corners on the garment, so wherever one turns, he will remember [the mitzvos]..."

(2) "It's a mitzvah to hold the tzitzis in one's left hand,⁵ next to his heart, when he

4. *Mishnah Berurah*: "This can be compared to someone who orders his friend about a certain matter and he puts a knot on his belt to help him remember."

5. *Mishnah Berurah*: "The Arizal teaches that he should hold the tzitzis between the fourth finger and the

says Shema. This is implied by the words, וְהָיָה הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה עַל לִבְךָ, "These words should be on your heart."⁶

(3) "It is proper to look at the tzitzis when one makes the *brachah* and puts them on."⁷

(4) "Some have the custom to look at the tzitzis when they get to וְרָאִיתֶם אוֹתָם, and they put the tzitzis on their eyes, this is a good custom.⁸ It shows love for the mitzvos.

"Rema: Some have the custom to kiss the tzitzis whenever they see them, and it is all for *chibuv mitzvah*, to show love for the mitzvah."

(5) "When one looks at the tzitzis, he should look at the two tzitzis before him, which have ten knots... and there are 16 strings. Together, these are gematriya 26, the *gematriya* of הו"ה.

(6) "...Whoever is cautious with tzitzis, will merit seeing the *Shechinah*."⁹

The Alshich HaKadosh explains that the tzitzis will only remind people to keep the mitzvos if they think about the purpose of the tzitzis. Otherwise, it can be compared to someone who ties a string around his finger to help him remember something, but he doesn't know what he is supposed to remember. The string around his finger won't help him remember. But if he knows what he is supposed to remember, each time

he looks at the string he will remind himself, and it will help him remember. The same is with the tzitzis: If each time we see the tzitzis we think that it is to remind us to keep the mitzvos, it will help us remember.

The Alshich writes, "Hashem says, 'I know that you are going to tell me that you wear tzitzis, but it isn't helping you to remember the mitzvos. Therefore, I am going to make you aware that if you will make the tzitzis in order to look at them and to remember the mitzvos, the tzitzis will serve this purpose, like a person who ties a string around his finger... However, if you are going to wear the tzitzis by rote, without intending to look at them to remember the mitzvos, then, surely, when you look at the tzitzis you won't remember Hashem's mitzvos. This is the intention of the *passuk*, וְהָיָה לָכֵן לְצִיצִית, your intention should be להציץ, to look at the tzitzis and to remember the mitzvos, and then, וְרָאִיתֶם אוֹתָם וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת ה', by looking at the tzitzis, you will remember to do all of Hashem's mitzvos. Whereas, if you don't intend to remember, how can it remind you..."

The Gemara (*Menachos* 43:) states, "The sin of not wearing the white tzitzis is greater than the sin of not wearing *techeles* [the colored blue tzitzis, because *techeles* is more expensive]. It can be compared to a human king who spoke with his two servants: He asked one servant to bring him מִיט של חותם, a

pinky, and when he reads the *parashah* of tzitzis, he should take them into his right hand and look at them. He should keep them in his hand until he gets to the words נֶאֱמָנִים וְנִחְמָדִים לְעֵד and then he should kiss them and put them down.

6. *Mishnah Berurah*: "Tzitzis saves a person from sins. As it states וְהָיָה קְדוּשָׁם... etc. All mitzvos protect a person from the *yetzer hara*, but the *segulah* of tzitzis is even greater. As the Gemara (*Menachos* 44.) tells a story [of someone who was protected from sin because of the tzitzis]."

7. *Mishnah Berurah*: "It says וְרָאִיתֶם אוֹתָם וּזְכַרְתֶּם, seeing brings to remembering and remembering results with doing."

8. *Mishnah Berurah*: "Early *sefarim* write that whoever places the tzitzis over his eyes when he reads the *parashah* of tzitzis is guaranteed that he won't go blind."

9. *Mishnah Berurah*: "One must make a beautiful talis and tzitzis. Also, all mitzvos must be made as beautifully as one can, as it states, וְזֶה קָלִי יְאֻנְהוּ, which means one should do beautiful mitzvos before Hashem..."

clay seal, and he asked the other slave to bring a *חותם של זהב*, a gold seal. They both didn't bring the seal. Who will receive a greater punishment? The one who was told to bring the clay seal, and he didn't!"

Notice that the Gemara uses an example of *חותם של טיט*, a clay seal, which people would use to mark their slaves. As *Rashi* writes, "They would make them for animals and for slaves when they bought them, a sign that he is your slave." Why did the Gemara use specifically this example? It's not random.

Tosfos writes, "Tzitzis is compared to a clay seal because they made clay seals for their slaves, and tzitzis identifies Yidden that they are Hakadosh Baruch Hu's slaves..."

In the past, a slave owner would brand his slaves to show that he is the owner of this slave. Tosfos says the tzitzis are like a seal and symbol, signifying that we are Hashem's slaves.

When we look at the tzitzis, we have a reminder that we are Hashem's slaves. If we remember this whenever we look at the tzitzis, we will be inspired to keep all the mitzvos, just as a slave must do the will of his master.

The Or HaChaim HaKadosh quotes this *Tosfos*, and writes: "*וראיתם אותו וזכרתם את כל מצות ה'*" *ועשיתם אותם* means, when you will look at the sign of your slavery, you will remember that you aren't free to do as you want with your food, clothing, speech etc., like a slave who is afraid of his master. You will stand when your master tells you to stand, and you will do all the tasks Hashem commands you to do..."

The next words of the Torah are, *ולא תתורו*, אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם, 'you will not stray after your heart and after your eyes...' The Or HaChaim explains that this is a very hard law to abide by, as by nature people desire what they see. Therefore, this mitzvah is written together with the mitzvah of tzitzis because by looking at the tzitzis and by remembering that we are Hashem's slave, we will have the fortitude to keep this difficult law.

Slave owners didn't make their *חותם*, seals, randomly. The seal depicted who the owner was (the owner's initials, and the like, were hinted to on the seal). Tzitzis also have indications to Hashem, so the wearer can remember that he is Hashem's slave. The Or HaChaim writes, "Hashem commanded that tzitzis are worn only on a garment that has four corners, not a garment of three corners or of five corners. This is because tzitzis are a sign of slavery. Hashem commanded that the symbol should reveal who our Master is [that we are enslaved to the One who rules over the four corners of the world]. This is also done by kings; each king has a symbol for their slaves, to identify the owner. Similarly, Hashem commanded that our mark of slavery should be on a four-cornered garment, showing that our King is the creator of the four corners of the world, and He rules over them.

"Hashem also commanded the strings to be white, which alludes to Hashem, because His attributes are compassion and goodness, which are represented by the color white. The *techeles*, which is the color of the heaven, hints to Hashem's rulership over the heavens...."¹⁰

10. After the Holocaust, the Klausenberger Rebbe *zt'l* would go around to many different DP camps. One day, the Rebbe came to a camp that had 150 survivors and said that he has one pair of tzitzis from America, and they would make a *gorel* to see who gets it.

The survivors hadn't performed this mitzvah for a long time, and they all wanted the opportunity.

Reb Mendel Tchipek, a Gerer chassid, ripped f his shirt in a way that obligated his garment with tzitzis. He said to the Rebbe, "My garment now has four corners, so I am obligated from the Torah to wear tzitzis. I should receive it."

The Preciousness of Time

Early one morning, the Rebbe of Radshitz *zt'l* said, "A special guest has arrived today. It's his first visit. He won't come again, so I want to honor him properly. The guest is 'today.' It came today, and it will never come back..." because time wasted is gone forever.

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* told the following *mashal*:

A simple farmer saved the king's life. To reward him, the king told the farmer that on a certain date, he can enter his treasury, and he has permission to take out as much as he desires, for one hour.

When the day of the reward arrived, the king was afraid the farmer may grab too much. So, the king made some inquiries about the farmer, and he found out about the kinds of foods and the style of music that this farmer enjoys.

The king set up a food stand near the treasury, with the farmer's favorite food. A band also played the farmer's favorite music.

The farmer couldn't resist, and he stopped to eat some of the food that he loved, and he also spent some time watching the band play his favorite music. By the time he was ready to enter the treasury there were only a few minutes left. The hour was almost over and he hadn't yet started collecting his reward.

The *nimshal* is: People become distracted by their pursuits for worldly pleasures and they forget to take the immense reward that is available for them.

The Ben Ish Chai *zt'l* tells the following *mashal*:

There were once two wealthy people who were always arguing about which one of them was wealthier. It was important for them to know, because the wealthier one was the one who had the final say in the city. They debated this matter for many years.

One day they decided to test it, once and for all. They would go to the ocean, and each of them will throw their money into the sea, coin by coin. The one who stops first shows

The Rebbe was visibly impressed by his *mesirus nefesh*, but he still couldn't give him the *tzitzis*, since everyone present also desired the *tzitzis*. The Rebbe told him, "Since you want the *tzitzis* so much, you will probably win the *gorel*."

He did.

A chassid of Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zt'l* had an only child, who wanted to marry a gentile woman. The parents brought their son to Rebbe Yissacher Dov and expressed their anguish. The boy stated clearly to his parents and to the Rebbe that no matter what the Rebbe would tell him, he would still marry that girl.

"I won't try to stop you," the Rebbe said. "But I have a request: I want you to wear a *tallis kattan* under your clothing at the wedding. I also want your father to attend your wedding."

Wearing a *tallis kattan* was a tiny sacrifice, which he was willing to do. Especially since this would bring his father to his wedding.

At the wedding there was a lot of drinking. The groom became hot from the alcohol and took off his jacket and unbuttoned his shirt. His *tzitzis* were revealed.

"He fooled us," the crowd jeered. "He's still a Jew!"

They began beating him up. The father quickly took his son out of the hall, away from danger. (That was apparently the reason the Rebbe advised the father to be at the wedding.) This wondrous story is an example of how the mitzvah of *tzitzis* saved someone from sinning.

that he doesn't want to lose so much money. The one who continues throwing his money into the sea proves that he has so much money, this loss is nothing for him. This will verify that he is wealthier.

The contest began, and after a while, one of them stopped. The other one was still throwing his coins into the sea. Apparently, he has so much money, he didn't care about losing all those coins. Everyone was stunned by his immense wealth.

Later it was discovered that he was throwing in counterfeit coins. That's the reason he didn't mind throwing them all into the sea.

The *nimshal* is, when one throws away time, it is a sign that he doesn't value it. Those who value time won't waste it.¹¹

The Gemara (*Chagigah* 5:) states, "Reb Idi (the father of Reb Yakov bar Idi) would travel for three months, stay one day in Rav's beis medresh, [and then take the three-month trip home]."

Rashi explains that Reb Idi lived far away from Rav's yeshiva – three months of travel. Every year, after Pesach, Reb Idi would begin his three-month trip to Rav's yeshiva, he would study Torah in Rav's yeshiva for one day, and then he traveled home for three months, so he can be home for Succos (because there is a mitzvah to be home for the yomim tovim, so he can make his spouse happy).

The Gemara writes that the students of the yeshiva began calling him, בר ביה רב דחד יומא, "A student of Rav's yeshiva for a day." Reb Idi felt they were mocking him. Reb Yochanan told him, "Please, don't punish

the students." In other words, he shouldn't be angry with them for teasing him, because this might result with the students being punished.

Then, Reb Yochanan went into the beis medresh and taught the following lesson: כל העוסק בתורה אפילו יום אחד בשנה - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו עסק כל השנה כולה, "Whoever studies Torah, even just one day a year, the *pasuk* considers it like he studied Torah the entire year."

Reb Yochanan added that the same is for punishments – one day of sin is counted like he sinned the entire year. We find this in this week's parashah. Because the miraglim sinned for forty days – the forty days they spied the land – and the punishment was that they had to remain in the desert for forty years. As it states (14:34), כמספר הימים אשר, "[forty years in the desert] corresponding to the amount of days they spied the Land." Reb Yochanan asked, "But did they sin for forty years? They only sinned for forty days! This tells us that whoever sins, even if it is just for one day a year, the *pasuk* considers it as if he sinned the entire year."

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* adds:

Based on the principle that reward is 500 times more than punishment,¹² if one serves Hashem for just one day a year, it is considered as though he served Hashem for five hundred years!

The Gemara (*Pesachim* 94:) states that the distance between heaven and earth is a five-hundred-year walk.

With this information, the Chasam Sofer explains the *pasuk*, למען ירבו ימיכם... כימי השמים על,

11. Some have a custom to give a gold watch as a gift to a *chasan*. This is to remind the *chasan* that time is precious like gold.

The Lev Simchah *zy'a* added that the gold watch is only the wrapper of time. The wrapper is always less valuable than what it holds. If the wrapper is made of gold, it shows that time is far more valuable.

12. Chazal say, מדה טובה מרובה על מדת פרעניות חמש מאות פעמים, "Hashem's attribute to bestow kindness is five hundred times more than His attribute to punish."

הארץ. This implies that by doing Hashem's will, your days will be increased, and each day will be valued *בימי השמים על הארץ*, like the five-hundred-year distance between heaven and earth. This is how much each day that you serve Hashem is worth. It is as if you served Hashem for five hundred years.

If he serves Hashem for another day, it will be as though he served Hashem for a thousand years, and so on.

When we think about these concepts, we can grasp the preciousness of time. One can earn so much reward with just one day of serving Hashem.