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## Parshas Pinchas

### *Tefillah*

The Sfas Emes (5647) teaches, *tefillah* should be the peak of one's day. One should yearn for those moments when he stands before Hashem in *tefillah*.

The Sfas Emes says that this idea is hinted at in this week's *parashah*. In reference to the *korban tamid*, the Torah states (28:2) תשמרו להקריב לי. One translation of תשמרו is "to wait, to anticipate" (see *Bereishis* 37:11). The *pasuk* is saying Klal Yisrael should aspire and wait for the moment when the *korban tamid* will be brought.

Especially for our generation, the Torah is telling us תשמרו להקריב לי, look forward for

when you can bring the *korbanos* once again.

In our generation, *tefillah* takes the place of *korbanos*. Thus, תשמרו להקריב לי means to aspire for those times of *tefillah*.

The Sfas Emes writes, "The entire day should be טפל, secondary, to *tefillah*. He should consider the main part of the day is when he davens."

This is as the *Kuzari* (3:5) writes, "For a chassid, moments of prayer are the 'heart' of his day. All other moments are the roads leading to that moment. He yearns for those moments of *tefillah*, for then he is closest to spirituality and most distant from animalistic behaviors."<sup>1</sup>

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1. The *Kuzari* adds that the *tefillah* should be like breakfast lunch and supper, where one meal keeps him satisfied until the next meal. So too, the prayers in the morning should give him spiritual sustenance until the next *tefillah*.

One of the hard things about *tefillah* is to know and visualize that you are actually having a conversation with Hashem.

A non-religious Yid visited yeshivas Kfar Chassidim when they were davening *Minchah*. These were his impressions: "There were *bachurim* swaying back and forth, but one could tell that the elderly man [Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l*] was actually speaking to someone."

Similarly, people had the impression that if they would interrupt Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz *zt'l* in the middle of his *tefillos*, he would respond, "Don't you see I'm in the middle of speaking with some-One."

When one prays for

something, it is almost like it has already been done.

When does one earn *parnassah*? Primarily when he *davens* for *parnassah*.

When does one find his *shidduch*? It happens mostly through prayers. Afterwards, one does *hishtadlus* to bring it forth, but it really happens when one prays for it.

The Torah (*Bereishis* 35:22-26) implies that Binayimin was born in Padan Aram.<sup>2</sup> The *rishonim* ask, we know Binyamin was born in Beis Lechem! (Binyamin was born when his mother, Rachel, was *niftarah*, and Rachel's demise was in Beis Lechem.) So why does the Torah imply that Binyamin was born in Padan Aram?

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2. The Torah states ...וערב בני יעקב שנים עשר "Yaakov had twelve children" (*Bereishis* 35:22). One of the twelve was obviously Binyamin. Then the Torah writes, אלה בני יעקב אשר ילד לו בפדן ארם, "These are Yaakov's children born to him in Padan Aram" (*Bereishis* 35:26). The implication is that also Binyamin was born in Padan Aram!



The Chizkuni answers, the *tefillah* which brought on Binyamin's birth was said in Padan Aram, so it can be said that he was born in Padan Aram, because primarily, everything happens by the prayers.

When Rachel gave birth to Yosef, she prayed, יוסף ה' לי בן, "May Hashem grant me another son." She said this *tefillah* in Padan Aram. Binyamin came to the world because of that *tefillah*. So, we can say that Binyamin was born in Padan Aram.

The following *mashal* is repeated in the name of the Dubno Magid zt'l:

A king announced, "Whoever has a request should come to my palace and I will grant it to him."

Many people came to the king's palace, and the king fulfilled their wishes. But there was one person who kept returning to the palace and

bothering the king with nonsense.

The king appointed guards at the palace's front door and ordered them to prevent this nudnik from coming into the palace. But the man didn't give up. He entered through a side entrance. The king sent guards there too, but the palace had many entryways, and this man always found a way to get in.

A wise man saw all the effort the king and his guards were investing to prevent him from getting into the palace, and he told the king, "There is a simpler solution. You don't need guards at every entrance. Appoint just one guard and have him stand in front of his home. They shouldn't let him leave his house. Then he won't be able to bother you anymore."

The *nimshal* is: The *yetzer hara* wants to prevent a Yid from approaching the King of the world, and to ask his

needs. So, the *yetzer hara* puts up blockades that prevent the Yid from davening with *kavanah*.

One barrier is having people speak during davening, which disturbs people's *kavanah*. Furthermore, conversations during the *tefillah* block everyone's *tefillos* from going up before Hashem. So even if one manages to daven with *kavanah*, his *tefillos* aren't answered because of others who are speaking during the *tefillah*.

The Yid who desires to daven with *kavanah* will seek other options. He hopes that perhaps he will yet succeed to daven with *kavanah*. So, he goes to a beis medresh where no one speaks during the *tefillah*, but the problem is they daven very quickly, and without inspiration. The *yetzer hara* arranged it to be that way, so people shouldn't daven with *kavanah*.

But the Yid so much wants to open up his heart in *tefillah*, so

he goes to *kivrei tzaddikim*, perhaps over there he will be able to daven well. At the *kivrei tzaddikim* someone insults him and ruins his mood, and now he can't daven. That person who insulted him was sent by the *yetzer hara*, to prevent this Yid from davening. This is the *yetzer hara's* way, always seeking to prevent the Yid from davening with *kavanah*.

But it is hard to put up guards everywhere. So, the *yetzer hara* found another solution. He put up one guard over the Yid's heart, which prevents the heart from being inspired for *tefillah*. Now, the Yid can go anywhere he wants; he won't be able to daven properly.

Everyone has this guard on his heart, but if one prays with fervor —even just external fervor — that will push the guard away and enable him to pour his heart out in prayer before Hashem. Furthermore, if he will be cautious with his eyes and thoughts, he will be

able to remove that guard and daven with *kavanah*.

### In Your Own Words

The Chofetz Chaim ז"ל (*Likutei Amorim* 10) teaches that one should get accustomed to davening in his own words. He writes, "In addition to the three daily *Shemonah Esreis*, one should pour out the depths of his heart in prayer, when alone in the house..."

The Chofetz Chaim writes, "These *tefillos* are important because the three daily *Shemoneh Esreis* are said by rote. One doesn't think so much about what he is saying. But when a person is by himself, and he thinks about his life, his poverty and troubles, and the worst part is that he's only earning enough for bread and water, he will pour his heart out like water before Hashem. The *tefillah* will be with *kavanah*, from the depths of his broken, humble heart, and such a *tefillah* will never remain unanswered."

The Gemara (*Brachos* 21) says, **ולואי שיתפלל אדם כל היום כולו**, "If only a person davens the entire day!" How can a person do that? It seems impossible!

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa ז"א explained: You should pray in your own words before all your deeds. When you travel, pray that Hashem should help you reach your destination. When you work, pray for success. When you learn, pray that you understand. Pray for everything you do. This is the Gemara's intention that one should pray the entire day. He won't be actually praying 24/7, but every deed will be preceded with a *tefillah*, and it will be like he was praying the entire day.

The Divrei Chaim ז"ל of Tzanz teaches that even when one speaks with his fellow man, he should intend his words as a *tefillah* to Hashem. Externally, he is speaking with his fellow man about worldly matters, but his heart is

speaking with Hashem, asking Hashem for His salvations. No one knows his intentions except for him and Hashem.

As it states, תפילה לעני כי יעטוף, "The prayer of a pauper who wraps and pours out his speech before Hashem." This pasuk hints that one should take all his conversations and wrap them as a *tefillah* before Hashem.

One needs to be on a very high level to create such a *tefillah*. It isn't a simple matter to have a conversation with someone, and simultaneously, intend a *tefillah* before Hashem.

Therefore, let's translate תפילה לעני כי יעטוף in a slightly different manner. The *pasuk* is saying that with everything you do, pray beforehand. As

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa teaches, pray for success in your work, pray for *shalom bayis*, pray for *nachas*. With every deed, realize you can't succeed without Hashem. Pray before everything you do and wrap all your deeds in *tefillah*.

### ***Maavir al Midosov***

The Gemara (*Chagigah* 4:) tells, Rav Bibi bar Abaya asked the *malach hamaves* (the angel of death), "When someone dies before his time, what do you do with all those extra years?"

The *malach hamaves* replied, "If I find a Torah student who מעביר על מדותיו, practices good *middos* beyond his limits, I give him those years."

Everyone has their limits.<sup>3</sup> There is only a certain amount

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3. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* teaches that everyone has their limit, their weak spot. For some it's money, for others it might be honor, jealousy, and so on. They can be totally normal, sane individuals, everything they do is logical and reasonable, but when something related to their limit is roused, they can act in the most insane and unwise ways to earn honor, money, etc. The *pasuk* advises, השם גבולך שלום, make peace



of disgrace one can endure before he feels he just must answer back. And, there is only a certain amount of *mesirus nefesh* one is ready to do for Hashem. He isn't ready to do more than that. Nevertheless, if one can go beyond those boundaries (and he is a Torah scholar too) he can earn the years of one who died young, before his time.

Pinchas was a Torah scholar who was מעביר על מדותיו. Thus, he was a fitting candidate to receive the years of those who died early.

We know that Pinchas was *maavir al midosov* from the following three sources:

1] The Maharam Shik ז"ל teaches: Pinchas placed his life at risk when he killed Zimri and Kozbi (see *Rashi*

*Bamidbar* 25:9). He was *maavir al midosov*, as he went beyond a human being's natural limit, who naturally strives to protect his life. He was willing to go beyond his limits (*maavir al midosov*) to do Hashem's will.

2] *Rashi* (25:1) writes, "The *shevatim* disgraced Pinchas... 'Did you see what Yisro's descendent did...? He killed a *nasi* of Yisrael!'" Pinchas accepted the shame in silence. He was *maavir al midosov* and didn't answer back.

3] The Ksav Sofer ז"ל writes: The nature of *cohanim* is to be kind, and Pinchas acted with vengeance and killed two people. Pinchas was *maavir al midosov*, he acted beyond his natural limits, and totally out of character, to do Hashem's will.

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your limits. The pursuit for peace should be so important to you that you pursue it under all circumstances, even when it illogical and even when common sense dictates the opposite. Your boundary is peace, which you refuse to transgress.

Doing so is *mesugal* for *parnassah*. As the end of the *pasuk* states, חלב חטים ישביעך, "you will be satiated with fat wheat..."

*Rashi* writes, "The *shevatim* disgraced Pinchas. They said, 'Did you see what Yisro's descendent did? His maternal grandfather [Yisro] fattened up calves for *avodah zorah* and now he went and killed a *nasi* of Yisrael!' Therefore, the *pasuk* associates his *yichus* to Aharon. As it states, פנחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן."

The Ksav Sofer explains that the *shevatim* were saying that Pinchas received his murderous nature from his grandfather Yisro. Because

the nature of *cohanim* is to seek peace [אהב שלום ורודף שלום] and Pinchas acted with vengeance. <sup>4</sup>

The Torah corrects them and writes that his *yichus* comes from Aharon, as it states, פנחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן. Pinchas had the kind nature of *cohanim*. Nevertheless, he was *maavir al midosov*, he went beyond his natural limits, to kill Zimri and Kozbi to bring honor to Hashem.

The Maharam Shik ז"ל concludes: Now that we've

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4. Reb Moshe Kodeveiro ז"ל (the Rama"k) was the author of the renowned *sefer Tomer Devorah*.

The Alter of Kelm ז"א said, "*Tomer Devorah* is the *Shulchan Aruch* for *middos*."

The first Rebbe of Bobov, Rebbe Shlomo ז"א, said he reached his levels because he studied *Tomer Devorah* in depth.

The Divrei Chaim of Tzanz ז"ל said that studying *Tomer Devorah* is a *refuah* for cancer. Similarly, the Yismach Yisrael of Alexander ז"ל advised people with cancer to study *Tomer Devorah*.

The *Tomer Devorah* teaches: Even when a person sins, Hashem continues to give him strength and life. One would think that Hashem will say, "If you are going against Me, why should I give you life and strength?" But Hashem, with His humility, gives strength and life to people, even when they disgrace Him. We are supposed to follow in Hashem's ways. Therefore, even when someone disgraces us, we should continue doing kindness for him.

seen that Pinchas was *maavir al midosov*, he is fitting to receive the years of anyone who died young. In Pinchas's era, twenty-four thousand people died before their time in a plague (see *Bamidbar* 25:9). Those years should go to a Pinchas, for he was a Torah scholar who was *maavir al midosov*.

The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Pinchas*) states, פנחס זה אליהו, Pinchas is Eliyahu HaNavi. Pinchas lives on until today. This is because he received the years of 24,000 people.

The Midrash states, ברין הוא שיטול שכרו, "Pinchas deserves his reward." This is because it's easy to serve Hashem within one's comfort zone. But when one must do something contrary to his natural

tendencies, he deserves reward for that.<sup>5</sup>

The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabba* 27:2) states: "Whoever made a *bris milah* before I gave him a child? Whoever built a *maakah* (gate) before I gave him a roof? Whoever put up a *mezuzah*, before I gave him a house? ...Whoever wore *tzitzis*, before I gave him a garment?" We don't really deserve reward for the mitzvos, because we were already rewarded with the good, we received. The exception, the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* says, is when one is humiliated, and he doesn't answer back. This good deed isn't preceded with a kindness. In fact, it was preceded with shame and humiliation. Therefore, about Pinchas it

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5. Supernatural miracles happen to the one who serves Hashem beyond his nature.

The Magid of Zlotchev *zt'l* taught, "When a person desires a miracle that's beyond nature – for example, he wants children, but according to the rules of nature that's impossible – he should do a great mitzvah, going beyond the limits of his nature. Just as he goes beyond his nature, miracles beyond nature will happen to him " (*Igra DePirka* 24).

states, ברין הוא שיטול שכרו, he deserves his reward.

### Shame

The Gemara (*Gittin* 55) says, "The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza." The Gemara tells the story how Bar Kamtza was embarrassed and humiliated and thrown out of a party.

Bar Kamtza thought, "There were rabbanim at the meal. Why didn't they speak up in my honor? Apparently, they also think I should be thrown out and treated this way. I will slander them to the king."

The result was the Churban Beis HaMikdash, as the Gemara tells in detail.

The Gemara (*Gitten* 57) concludes, "Take note of the severity of shame. Since Bar Kamtza was shamed, Hashem

helped Bar Kamtza and the Beis HaMikdash was burned..." *Keviyachol*, Hashem helped Bar Kamtza take revenge, because he was so humiliated and hurt. We should learn from this how careful we must be not to embarrass our fellow man.<sup>6</sup>

This story also shows us the pain of being shamed and humiliated. If Hashem helped Bar Kamtza because of his humiliation, this means he suffered immensely from his humiliation. Therefore, if one receives shame and humiliation, and nevertheless remains silent, his reward is very great.

When there was a drought in the era of the *tana'im* and *amora'im*, the *chachamim* would decree a fast day, they would pray, and it would immediately begin to rain. The

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6. If the rabbanim at this *seudah* knew that Bar Kamtza's humiliation would result with the Churban Beis HaMikdash, they would have done whatever they could to keep Bar Kamtza at the meal. In retrospect, one always knows better. The trick is to be cautious from the onset.

Gemara (*Tanis* 24) tells of a time when there was a drought, Reb Pappa decreed a fast day, he prayed for rain, but it didn't rain. Reb Pappa became weak and felt he must eat something, so he ate a spoonful of porridge. Reb Nachman said, "Eat another spoon of porridge. Perhaps then it will rain." Reb Nachman was teasing him, implying, *how do you expect it to rain if you aren't fasting?*

The Gemara says, "Rav Pappa was embarrassed, he felt humiliated, and then it rained."

The Yaavatz *zt'l* explains, "Rav Nachman teased him intentionally, so Reb Pappa would be embarrassed and his *tefillos* would be answered."<sup>7</sup>

The Gemara (*Tanis* 24-25) states, "Every day a *bas kol* proclaims, 'The entire world receives *parnassah* in the merit of My son Chanina, while My son Chanina [only

has] a *kav* of carobs to eat per week."

Reb Chanina's wife was embarrassed by their poverty, so on *Erev Shabbos* she would burn plants in her oven so smoke would rise from their chimney and the neighbors should think she was baking challah for Shabbos.

An evil neighbor suspected that there wasn't anything baking in Reb Chanina's wife's oven, so she knocked at their door to check.

Reb Chanina's *rebbetzin* ran to the next room, in shame. When the neighbor saw no one was opening the door, she let herself in. She opened the oven and saw it was filled with *challos*, and she saw the kneading bowl was overflowing with dough. She shouted, "*Rebbetzin!* Mrs! Bring your stick and take the challos out because they are going to burn."

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7. This Gemara is yet another source to the renowned concept that when one is shamed, he has the power of *tefillah*.

Reb Chanina's wife replied, "I know. I went to this room to bring the stick to take out the *challos*.

The Sfas Emes (on Shas) writes, "This *tzadekes* wasn't lying when she said she went to get the stick. Since she had so much shame, she knew a miracle would happen to her, and there would be bread in the oven. Therefore, she went to bring the stick."<sup>8</sup>

### No Worries

Rebbe Moshe Kobriner *zt'l* said, "All the wealth in the world doesn't compare to the precious moments of when a Yid has *yishuv hadaas*."

With *yishuv hadaas*, a calm, collected mind, one can conquer the *yetzer hara*. With confusion and with fear, we have fallen into his trap.

Old *sefarim* tell about a bird species that builds its nest

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8. Someone once dreamed that people were hitting him. He woke up alarmed. "Where is he? Where are those hooligans who hit me?"

"It was just a dream," someone replied.

"I know it was just a dream," he says, "but how does that help me? Someone hit me in my dream, and I must take revenge."

This is nonsensical, but this is how people are when they are shamed and desire to answer back. We can speak common-sense, but they don't understand. We tell them, "You will gain so much from remaining silent. It will purify you. If you remain silent, it's an *eis ratzon* for your *tefilllos* to be answered. You will reach very high levels, if you don't answer back. Besides, why should you want to answer back? Don't you know that everything is from Hashem. Everything that happened is obviously *bashert*." The person replies, "Everything you say is true, but how does that help me. Right now, I want to answer back."

The Sfas Emes compared staying silence when shamed or angered to a steam engine that runs on the steam's pressure contained within the engine. Holding back your anger and burning emotions will bring you to great places.



high up on the peak of tall trees, where snakes can't get. What do snakes do? A snake waits underneath the tree, with its mouth wide open. The bird, high in the tree, sees the snake and becomes paralyzed with fright. It loses its balance and falls down into the snake's mouth.

The *yetzer hara* does the same. He causes people to be afraid of something. The fear paralyzes them, making them vulnerable to fall into the *yetzer hara's* trap.

If they wouldn't be afraid, they would courageously

conquer the *yetzer hara*. But with fear, they are paralyzed and fall into his trap.<sup>9</sup>

Haman also knew this secret, that the Jewish nation falls when they are afraid. Therefore (Esther 9:24) הפיל פור הוא הגורל להמם ולאבדם, "Haman cast the *gorel* to frighten them and to destroy them." The first step was להמם, to confuse them, to frighten them, because he knew that afterwards, it will be easier לאבדם, to annihilate them, *chalilah*.

Similarly, the *Zohar* [3:199] states that the first two

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9. A fly was annoying the Chazon Ish. The *shamash* tried to shoo it away, but the fly kept returning. The Chazon Ish said, "It's a *rosh hashanah* fly." On Rosh Hashanah it was destined that a fly would disturb him.

The Gemara (*Brachos* 61) compares the *yetzer hara* to a fly. What's the comparison?

(1) Flies rob people from their peace of mind. Similarly, the *yetzer hara's* goal is to rob people of their peace of mind, by arousing worries, and in several other ways.

(2) When someone has a wound, flies go there. The *yetzer hara* does the same, as the *yetzer hara* urges people to focus on their own faults. One may have many good qualities, but the *yetzer hara* directs one's mind to see where he's bad, to cause the person unhappiness and despair.

letters of בלק and בלעם spell בלבב, confusion, and the last letters spell עמלק. This hints that בלעם and בלק knew that they must confuse and frighten the Jewish nation, for this would bring about Klal Yisrael's downfall.

### ***Eemunah and Bitachon***

The solution to overcome fear, and to attain *yishuv hadaas*, is to increase in *emunah* and *bitachon*.

The Chofetz Chaim *zy'a* said that when Reb Mordechai Binet *zy'a* of Nikolsburg would deliver a *shiur* (and sometimes when he was studying by himself too) he would wave his hand in the air, or upon his table, as though he was writing something. The students watched his hand movements carefully until they figured out that he was writing the words אשרי איש שלא ישכחך וכן אדם בך (from *Mussaf Shemonah Esrei* of Rosh HaShanah). He was reminding himself that he should never

forget Hashem, even when he was deep in learning.

When one remembers Hashem, he is never afraid.

In this week's *parashah*, Hashem tells Moshe and Elazar HaCohen (26:2) שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל, which can be translated, "Raise their heads of the entire Jewish nation." Moshe and Elazar HaCohen were ordered to elevate the nation's awareness that everything is from Hashem. With this awareness, they will not be frightened by the many challenges of life.

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* teaches that many people trust in Hashem, but they think Hashem will help them solely through a certain means. A shopkeeper believes that Hashem will help him earn his livelihood by sending him customers. A *shadchan* trusts that Hashem will help him earn money, by helping him make many *shidduchim*, and so on. They trust that Hashem will help them through a

specific means, and they forget that Hashem can help in other ways too.

But one should trust in Hashem, alone. Hashem has many ways, and it may not be the way we imagine. In fact, Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* says, “Generally, Hashem helps in ways the person never imagined.” We don’t have to offer Hashem ideas how He should help us. We trust that Hashem will help in any way He sees fit.

The Baal Shem Tov said that this is the translation of the *pasuk*, ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה' מנצחו, “Bless is the person who trusts in Hashem, and Hashem is the One in whom he trusts.” The *pasuk* seems to be repeating twice that he trusts in Hashem and it seems superfluous.

The *pasuk* is saying, ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה', “Bless is the person who trusts in Hashem, and he places his trust in Hashem, alone.”

He doesn’t need to know how Hashem will help him. He trusts that Hashem will help him through any means He sees fit. It could be through the ways he imagines, and it might be through any other venue.

It states (*Tehillim* 118), טוב לחסות בר' מבטוח באדם. We can translate this *pasuk* in two ways. The literal translation is, “It is better to trust in Hashem than to trust in man.”

It can also be translated, “One knows that it is better to trust in Hashem from those times he trusted in man.”

Think back to those times you trusted in man and it resulted in failure. The man you trusted in didn’t pull through. He wasn’t there when you needed him. One learns from such experiences that it isn’t wise to trust in man, only in Hashem.

This is the meaning of the *pasuk*, טוב לחסות בר', it is better to trust in Hashem, מבטוח באדם, the proof is from those times you trusted in man, and you

saw that the man you trusted  
in didn't help you.<sup>10</sup>

### Avoiding *Machlokes*

The Imrei Noam told the  
following *mashal*:

A lion said to a sheep,  
"Smell my breath and tell me  
how it is."

The sheep told him the truth,  
"Your breath smells horrid."

The lion roared, "Where is  
your respect for the king of all  
animals?" and the lion  
devoured the sheep.

Then the lion went to the wolf,  
"How does my breath smell?"

The wolf saw what happened  
to the sheep, so it knew that it  
shouldn't tell the truth. It said,  
"Your breath smells lovely."  
"You're lying!" roared the lion,  
and the lion devoured the  
wolf.

The king went to the fox,

"Smell my breath, and tell me  
how it is?"

The fox realized that whether  
he tells the king the truth or a  
lie his life is in danger. So he  
pointed to his nose, and said,  
"I have a cold and my nose is  
stuffed. I can't smell  
anything." In this manner, the  
fox's life was saved.

The Imrei Noam explains:  
When one is involved in a  
*machlokes*, whichever side he  
takes, he'll be in trouble. The  
best counsel therefore is to  
avoid the *machlokes* and  
keep away.

It is told that the Chofetz  
Chaim ז"ל once left Radin for  
a few weeks, to avoid being  
drawn into a *machlokes*. A  
*machlokes* was raging in  
Radin, which the Chofetz  
Chaim couldn't silence, so he

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10. Following the rules of dikduk, there is a difficulty with the first translation we brought, because it should have said מלבוטו (with a ל"ד in מלבוטו). As it is written, מבוטו, it hints to the second translation. From those times he trusted in man, he knows that it is better to trust in Hashem.

preferred to be distant from the *machlokes* and the *lashon haras*, than to get involved.

A close disciple of Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach *zt'l* tells that he once came to Reb Shlomo Zalman's home and was appalled to see many people speaking to Reb Shlomo Zalman with *chutzpah*. The student said, "When they left, I asked Reb Shlomo Zalman how he was able to remain serene and silent even as they were attacking him. He told me the following story:

The Chofetz Chaim's son-in-law, Reb Aharon Cohen *zt'l*, arrived in Eretz Yisrael from Europe. He moved to the Shaarei Chesed section of Yerushalayim, and the community helped him get settled. But after living in Shaarei Chesed for a few months, Reb Aharon suddenly disappeared. No one knew where he went.

Someone announced in beis medresh, "If anyone knows

where Reb Aharon Cohen is, he should come forward and tell us."

An old man said, "A week ago, Reb Aharon left for Yaffo with all his belongings."

The community sent some people to Yaffo to ask him why he left their community.

Reb Aharon greeted his guests warmly and expressed his gratitude to the entire Shaarei Chesed community for helping him get settled.

Then he explained, "When I left Europe, and I said goodbye to my father-in-law, the Chofetz Chaim, I asked him where I should live in Eretz Yisrael. I told him that I was considering Yerushalayim, Tzfas, Chevron, or Yaffo, and I told him the pros and cons of each choice. He told me that all options were good and that it doesn't make a difference where I live. He added, 'But there is one thing I request from you: Promise me you will run away

from a place where there's *machlokes*." At the time a *machlokes* was brewing in Shaarei Chesed, so Reb Aharon left.

The *shelichim* returned and told everyone what Reb Aharon Cohen said. Reb Shlomo Zalman said, "I was a young child then, and their report about Reb Aharon Cohen's caution from *machlokes* made a strong impact on me. I made a firm decision that I will never get involved in a *machlokes*. Now you understand why I didn't answer back those people who rebuked me today."

Reb Kahanaman *zt'l*, *rosh yeshiva* of Ponovezh, was in England collecting funds, when someone disgraced him in a very demeaning way. The rabbanim of London wanted to punish that person but the Ponovezher Rav told them not to.

They said, "We understand that the Ponovezher Rav forgives him, but we must

stand up for the Rav's honor, which is the honor of Torah."

The Ponovezher Rav replied, "The Chofetz Chaim told me I will be successful with everything I do, except for *machlokes*. With a *machlokes*, I will never succeed."

There were two *shochtim* working in Shechetz, Poland, hired by two different *kehilos* (congregations). The *shochtim* were at peace with each other, but the *kehilos* were rivals, as each of them wanted their *shochet* to be the primary *shochet* of Shechetz.

One of the *shochtim* wrote to the Piltzer Rav (the *Sifsei Tzaddik*) about what was happening.

The *Sifsei Tzaddik* wrote back, "*Machlokes* is a fire and from fire one runs away. Pack your bags and leave Shechetz immediately."

The *shochet* never received the letter. The letter arrived at the home of one of the primary *baalei machlokes*. As he had



an interest that this *shochet* remain in Shechetz, he didn't show him the letter.

A few days later, the *shochet* died.

The family never forgave that man for holding on to the letter. They held him responsible for the *shochet's* death. Because machlokes is fire, and from fire one must run away.

### Shabbos

In the *tochachah*, when the Torah discusses the afflictions in *galus*, the Torah says (*Vayikra* 26:34) *אז תרצה הארץ את שבתותיה*... The Tiferes Shlomo *zt'l* translates this *pasuk* as follows: "אז, when Yidden are in *galus*, את שבתותיה, Hashem will enjoy the Shabbosim...The Shabbosim [in *galus*] are more joyous to Hashem than [the Shabbosim] when the Beis HaMikdash stood. This is because...during the week, *keviyachol*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is also in *galus*, as it states, *עמו אנכי בצרה*. But when Shabbos comes,

Hakadosh Baruch Hu has immense joy...because He leaves *galus*..."

The Shabbosim of the Three Weeks are especially very lofty and joyous times. The Tiferes Shlomo writes, "It states [in *Lecha Dodi*], *רב לך שבת* 'Shabbos is great *בעמק הבכא*, in the low times.' This is referring to the weeks of Bein HaMetzarim, between the 17th of Tamuz until Tisha b'Av, for they are *עמק הבכא*, low days. These weeks, *רב לך שבת*, the Shabbosim are greater than the Shabbosim of the rest of the year. This is because there is greater distress during these weeks, so on Shabbos the joy is extra great in heaven... What we should learn from this is that every Yid should be happy on Shabbos... And when we are happy it makes Hashem even happier."

The highest point of Shabbos is *shalosh-seudos* time. This is because the afternoon is generally a time of *din* (harsh judgment) and Shabbos turns it into *rachamim*

(compassion) and whenever *din* turns into *rachamim* it's a very special time.

The Yid HaKadosh *zy'a* taught that in the Three Weeks all twenty-four hours of the day are times of *din*, and Shabbos turns them into *rachamim*. Thus, during the Three Weeks the entire Shabbos is special and holy, similar to *shalash-seudos* time.

The *Zohar* (*Vaykira* 182) debates who is greater: the Jewish nation or the *malachim*? The *Zohar* concludes that on Shabbos, the Jewish nation is greater, and on the weekdays, the *malachim* are greater.

### **Torah**

On Shabbos, it is like we are liberated from *galus*. Another way to escape *galus* is to study Torah.

Rebbe Aharon of Belz said that when a Yid learns Torah there is no *galus*. An indication to this is that it is permissible to eat meat and

drink wine at a *siyum* celebration during the Nine Days.

The Chozeh of Lublin *zt'l* said: Halachah states that at a *bris* in the Nine Days, only ten people may eat meat and drink wine at the meal. But if there's a *siyum* in the nine days, there is no limit to the amount of participants. More than ten people can enjoy meat and wine at the meal.

What's the difference?

The Chozeh explains that the Churban came about because they weren't studying Torah, as it states, (*Yirmiyahu* 9:11) *על מה אבדה ארץ על עוזבם את תורת*, "Why was the land destroyed? It is because they abandoned My Torah." Therefore, when one finishes a *masechta* and makes a *siyum* he amends the cause of the *churban*, and there is a scent of the *ge'ulah* in the air. Therefore, all participants can partake in the meal.

The Mishnah (*Avos* 2:14) says, *הוי שקוד ללמוד תורה*, "be diligent

to study Torah." The Avodas Yisrael writes that הוי is *gematriya* 21, corresponding to the 21 days of the Three Weeks. "הוי, during the Three Weeks; שקוד ללמוד תורה, devote yourself to studying Torah." The Avodas Yisrael explains, "It is the way of kings to...have musicians. When the king is happy, he doesn't need a band to play for him because he's happy without them. But when the king is sad, he will call for his musicians to play music and make him happy. Likewise, *keviyachol*...the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, and there's sadness... Someone who cares should come before the King without any unhappiness, and he should make the King happy... We accomplish this by studying Torah with joy."

During the Holocaust, people were amazed to see Rebbe Pinchas of Ustila *zy'a* (the son-in-law of Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zy'a*) learning Torah with immense

*hasmadah*. How did he have the strength to put aside all the pain and devastation and delve into Torah study?

People asked him this, and he replied, "People asked my father-in-law this very same question in World War I. People couldn't understand how he had the peace of mind to study Torah then. He explained that during hard times it's even more important to study Torah. Because the Mishnah says, 'When a person has pain...the *Shechinah* says, *'My head hurts. My arms hurt,* which means Hashem suffers together with us. We are living in a time when Klal Yisrael is in distress, and Hashem suffers together with us. It's our obligation to make Hashem happy, and nothing brings joy to Hashem like a Yid who learns Torah."

May these days of mourning become days of happiness, with the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days, amen.

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