

לעילו נשמת: פייגה בת הרב אהרן ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

לזכות רפואה שלמה: מלכה בת רחל, מיכאל בן שולמית, יעקב משה בן דבורה שירה, ואברהם יהודה בן שרה רבקה.

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita

Noach



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Torah Wellsprings

Noach

New Beginnings

The Rokeiach zt'l (introduction) teaches the following brief lessons:

- There is no love like the love for Hashem.

- There is no crown like humility.

- There is no profit like that gained from keeping the mitzvos.

- No merit compares to the merit of being מוכה הרבים (to influence others to do good).

- There is no *korban* like a broken heart.

- No wisdom compares to the wisdom of the Torah.

- Nothing is worse than *machlokes*.

- No one hates you more than the *yetzer hara* does.

- There's no enemy like temptation.

- No one is wiser than a person with experience."

The Rokeiach concludes, אין חוק מן החסידות בתחלתו, "Nothing is stronger than chassidus at its beginning." These final words mean that when you are at the beginning of chassidus - for example, you recently accepted on yourself the yoke of Torah and mitzvos - this is a powerful force, and nothing can stop you from attaining your goals.

We quote this now because, over the *yomim tovim*, many people made *kabalos* plans to improve their ways. We are still at the beginning of the chassidus, the start of our new resolutions. Let the power of beginnings enable us to overcome all obstacles that come our way, and may our *kabalos* remain with us throughout the year.

We also discuss אין חזק מן החסידות בתחלתו, "Nothing is stronger than chassidus at its beginning" because many yeshivos and *kollelim* begin their new *zman* now. The students buy new Gemaros and new *Shulchan Aruchs*, and they are motivated to discover, and perhaps to become experts, in new horizons of Torah. Let this spirit of beginnings stay with us; it shouldn't taper off over time because there is nothing more powerful than chassidus at its inception.

In practical terms, this means to employ the aspect of *hislahavus*, fiery devotion, in the beginning,¹ as we will explain.

The first *luchos* were broken; the second *luchos*

weren't. Why? Chazal (*Tanchuma, Ki Sisa, 37:31*) explain, אין לך יפה מן הצניעות, "Nothing is more beautiful than modesty. As it states, והצנע לכת עם ה' אלךך, 'Go with Hashem in modesty.'... The first *luchos* were given בפומבי, in public; therefore, they were broken. About the second *luchos*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, 'There is nothing more beautiful than modesty...' they were given quietly, and therefore they weren't broken."

The Sfas Emes (*Ki Sisa* אין (תרל"ט ד"ה ברש"י asks, since Hashem knows the future, and Hashem knew from the onset that something צנוע, concealed, has a greater potential to endure, why didn't Hashem initially

1. When one makes a coffee, he uses boiling hot water, although he will never drink it at that temperature. But if he wants that the water should cool off, why doesn't he use less hot water, to begin with? The answer is, the beginning has to be hot, fiery, *hislahavus*. This is a *mashal* to *avodas Hashem*, which has to be hot and fiery at the beginning, and afterwards, one can take a more tranquil attitude.

give us the Torah in that humble manner?

The Sfas Emes replies that beginnings always need to be with *hislahavus*. Therefore, when the Torah was given on Har Sinai, it was with, קולות וברקים וענן כבד על החר וקול שופר חזק מאד ויחרד כל העם אשר במחנה, "With sounds and lightning, a heavy cloud over the mountain, the sound of the shofar was very strong, and the entire nation that was in the camp were terrified" (*Shemos* 16:19). The Sfas Emes writes, "This is a lesson for all generations: A person must begin with immense *hislahavus*, and although his fiery passion won't last, nevertheless, it will help him when he falls later on."

A person isn't always on a high level. He has ups

and downs. Therefore, it is natural that sometime during the year, he will forget about the *kabalos* he made at the beginning of the year. Similarly, it is natural that as the *zman* proceeds, he might miss a *sugya* here and there. Nevertheless, the *hislahavus* of the beginning will be the motor that will propel him throughout the year.²

After the *mabul* (flood), it was time to start the world anew. Noach planted a vineyard, and that caused terrible consequences, as the Torah tells us. Noach becomes intoxicated, etc. The Seforno explains that Noach's error was that he began the restoration of the world by planting a vineyard. As the Seforno writes, "Noach began with

2. Chazal (*Yerushalmi Brachos* 9:5) say, אם תעזובני יום יומיים אעזובך, "If I leave the Torah for one day, the Torah will leave me for two days." This is hinted at in the words, אלה תולדות נח..., and נח is written twice. This means, the children, the outcome of נח, resting, is נח, resting another day. Because מנוחה גוררת מנוחה, one resting draws the next one (taught in "Reb Yeiva" from Reb Yaakov Yosef of Austrao *zt'l*).

something improper. This is because a drop of *kilkul* in the beginning, causes a lot of *kilkul* at the end. (This is also true in mathematics and science: A minor miscalculation early on can result in a terrible outcome)...³

We are all at a new beginning - a new year, a new *zman*, etc. If we set off correctly, everything that follows will be good, too.

Emunah and Bitachon

Rashi (7:7) writes, אף נח מקטני אמונה היה, מאמין ואינו מאמין שיבא המבול, "Noach was weak in his *Emunah*. He believed, and he didn't believe that the *mabul* would come. Therefore, he didn't enter

the *teivah* until it began to rain, and he was forced to go inside because of the flood."

The *Ohev Yisrael zt'l* writes in the name of Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev *zt'l* that Noach was a צדיק תמים, a perfect *tzaddik*. Knowing this, it is hard to understand that he displayed doubts in *Emunah*.

"*Emunah*, he explains, has two explanations: It means to believe (as it generally is translated), and it also means to raise, as it states (*Esther 2:7*), ויהי אמן את הדסה, and Mordechai raised Esther. When one believes and trusts in something, this automatically raises its

3. We quote the Seforno here:

התחיל בפעל בלתי נאות ולכן נמשכו מזה מעשים אשר לא יעשו כי אמנם מעט מן הקלקול בהתחלה יסבב הרבה ממנו בסוף כמו שיקרה בחכמו' מהטעות בהתחלה

The Siforno writes that this also happens by wisdoms. A drop of error in the beginning results in terrible consequences. Indeed, all false philosophies and theories might seem gentle and innocent when they are just in theory. However, the theories will soon be translated into actions, and every small incorrect notion at the onset can have serious consequences.

value and causes it to exist. Noach certainly believed in Hashem with all his heart and soul, but regarding this matter [that a flood was coming], he was afraid to believe in Hashem with all his heart because he feared that his belief might cause it to happen. In this matter, he didn't know what he should do. This is Rashi's intention, מאמין ואינו מאמין. He believed, but he was afraid to believe fully that Hashem will bring the *mabul*, because perhaps the belief itself will cause the *mabul* to happen. That is why he waited until the flood began to enter the *teivah*."

One lesson that we can take from this discussion is to recognize the strength of *bitachon*. When one truly believes that Hashem will help him, the *Emunah* itself brings down the *yeshuah*.

(It is also because הבוטח בה' חסד יסובבנו, Hashem helps those who trust in Him, and so on. But a part of the equation is because

Emunah and *bitachon* make and causes it to be so.)

When one has *bitachon*, he won't be worried about his *parnassah*, and he won't steal from others. He knows that Hashem is taking care of him. The דור המבול behaved in the exact opposite way. They stole from one another because they didn't believe that Hashem gives everyone the portion due to him. They didn't believe that it is impossible to gain if it is against Hashem's will. They were called דור המבול, which also means confusion. Everyone in that generation was confused and worried, as that is the nature of those who don't trust in Hashem.

Noach was the opposite of all the above. He trusted in Hashem, and, as his name implies, he was נח, calm, and relaxed at all times.

It states (*Bereishis* 6:7), ונה מצא חן בעיני ה' "Noach found favor in Hashem's eyes." The Gemara explains that

Noach didn't deserve to be saved. He was saved because Hashem found *chen*, favor, in Noach. The Or HaChaim explains, "There is a mitzvah, or there are three or four mitzvos that are *mesugal* for *chen*..." Noach performed those mitzvos, and Hashem found *chen* in him.

But we are left to grope in the dark, to figure out which mitzvah (or mitzvos) are the ones that grant us *chen*! Some explain that the hint is in the words of the *pasuk*, וְנֹחַ מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה' . When he was experiencing hard times or good times, Noach knew it was 'ה' בְּעֵינֵי ה' through Hashem's *hashgachah*. Because of this *Emunah*, he found *chen* in Hashem's eyes.

The Ben Ish Chai (*Ben Yohoyada*, *Beitzah* 16.) says having *bitachon* is *mesugal* for *chen*. The hint is in the word *בְּטַחָחֹן* which has in it two words: חֵן -טוֹב. "Because of his *בְּטַחָחֹן*, he brings down and a bounty of טוֹב, good."

This is hinted in the *pasuk* (Tehillim 84:12), חֵן וְכִבּוֹד יִתֵּן ה' לֹא יִמְנַע, לְהוֹלִכִים בְּתַמִּימוֹת that for those who go with *temimus*, and they have *bitachon*, Hashem will give them *chen*, *kavod*, and *tov*.

The Chareidim (*Mitzvas Asei* 1) writes, "Noach was always very calm and tranquil. Therefore, it states, וְנֹחַ מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה' the Midrash explains, his calm and tranquil attitude found favor by Hashem. Tranquility is associated with *kedushah*, and anger with *tumah*... Noach's name is written three times in this *pasuk* (the first *pasuk* of the *parashah*) because Noach was נֹחַ, extremely calm and tranquil in the way he spoke, walked, (הלכו), and did things (מעשיו).

The people in the generation of the *mabul* were very anxious, as we explained. They didn't believe that *parnassah* is from Hashem, and therefore, everyone stole from each other. Noach trusted, and he believed in

Hashem, and this attitude granted him *הן בעיני ה'*.

Shmiras Einayim

The Beis Avraham *zt'l* taught that Noach found *chen* because, *בעיני ה'*, he was cautious with his eyes.

Being cautious with your eyes is the foundation of the Torah. The final words of the Torah are *לעיני ישראל*, "before the eyes of all Yisrael," and connects with the first word of the Torah, *בראשית*, because the foundation and the beginning of the Torah are to be cautious with one's eyes.⁴

Guarding your eyes isn't an easy test, but instead of considering this mitzvah as a massive chore and difficult test, consider it an excellent opportunity to keep the mitzvah of *לא*

תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם "Don't stray after...your eyes."

There was a renowned Slonimer chassid named Reb Mordechai (Motke) Leider *zt'l*. Once, as a *yungerman*, he was very ill, and people thought he would die. Miraculously, he survived. After his recovery, he came to the beis medresh and said, "Yesterday I almost did the *kuntz*" (trick, implying that he almost died and went up to heaven. He was implying that this would have been better because then he wouldn't have the tests of this world).

Another renowned Slonimer chassid, Reb Elazar Katz *zt'l* replied, "What did you say? That you almost made 'the *kuntz*'? How would you survive up there in heaven? You don't have the mitzvah

4. On the *pasuk* *לעיני כל ישראל*, Rashi writes, *וְזוֹ שְׁבִירַת הַלּוּחוֹת*, this is referring to [when Moshe] broke the *luchos*." The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said that implied is that when one isn't careful with his eyes, that's like *שְׁבִירַת הַלּוּחוֹת*, the shattering of the *luchos*, *chas veshalom*.

of לא תתורו (the mitzvah to be cautious with one's eyes)."

When Shem and Yafes covered Noach, the Torah says that they purposely turned their eyes away, not to see Noach uncovered. They turned their eyes away twice, as it states (9:23), ויקח שם ויפת את השמלה וישמו על, שכם שניהם וילכו אחרונות ויכסו ערות אביהם, ופניהם אחרונות וערות אביהם לא ראו, "Shem and Yafes took the cloak... walked *backward*, and covered their father's *ervah*. Their faces were turned *backward*, and they didn't see their father's *ervah*..." Rashi explains, "Why does it say a second time [אחרונות, that they turned their heads backward]? This teaches us that when they came close to Noach, and they had to cover him, they turned their faces away [again]," to avoid seeing Noach in his undressed state. Shem and Yafes walked backward, and when they covered him, they turned their faces away again.

The Alshich HaKadosh asks, wouldn't it be sufficient to simply close their eyes? Why did they have to turn their heads away? The Alshich answers that even to face an *ervah* creates a *pgam*, a blemish, on one's soul. Shem and Yafes didn't want to see, and not even to face, an *ervah*. We learn from this how careful one must be to protect the purity of our soul.

The Torah also states (9:24), וירא חם אבי כנען את ערות אביו, "Cham, the father of Canaan saw his father's *ervah*," and as a result, Noach cursed Cham that he will be a slave. The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 70) states the terrible things Cham did to Noach, but from the literal words of the *pasuk* (without Chazal's explanation), it seems that Cham's sin was only that he saw his father's *ervah*. The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said we can learn from this the severity of not guarding one's eyes. It seems that for this alone,

one deserves the curses Noach gave to Cham, *chalilah*.

Today, it is especially important to discuss guarding one's eyes because the challenges one faces regarding his eyes confront him everywhere. If one isn't cautious, this flood can penetrate the fortress of the Jewish home.

The Torah tells that the dove returned to Noach with an olive branch in its mouth, וידע נח כי קלו המים מעל הארץ, "Thereby Noach knew that the waters upon the earth had receded." The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 33:6) asks: How did the bird get an olive branch? Weren't all the trees destroyed in the flood? One answer is, נפתחה, "The gates of Gan Eden opened, and she brought the olive branch from there."

The Ramban (8:11) quotes this Midrash, and he asks that if the olive branch came from Gan Eden, where the flood didn't reach, how did Noach know from the olive branch that the waters of the flood were subsiding?

The Ramban answers that during the *mabul*, the gates of Gan Eden were sealed, so the waters of the flood wouldn't enter. When Noach saw that the dove was able to enter Gan Eden, Noach understood that the gates of Gan Eden were open once again. That was his sign that the waters had receded.

We learn from this Ramban that we must seal our homes' doors tight from harmful influences, just as the gates of Gan Eden were sealed shut, so the flood shouldn't enter.⁵

5. Reb Yehudah of Nasid *zt'l* once jumped out of the window of a moving train, to avoid the sin of *yichud*. People asked him, "Reb Yehudah, the woman who boarded the train was an old woman. Are you afraid of an old woman?"

Chesed

Reb Elazer Tzaddok Turchin *zt'l* was always a *masmid*, even as a bachur, but the following incident raised his knowledge and *hasmadah* in Torah to a very high level.

One *erev* Yom Kippur, he was ready early to go to *beis medresh* to say *Tefillah Zakkah*, in preparation for Yom Kippur. He was rushing to *beis medresh* when the *Tepliker Rav zt'l* called to him, "*Bachur'!* *Bachur'!* I need some help cleaning my home."

Reb Elazar Tzaddok put aside his aspirations to be in *beis medresh* early and made it his sole objective to help the elderly *Tepliker Rav*. When he completed the deed, the *Tepliker Rav* told him, "I know that you have many things to do, and you helped me with *mesirus nefesh*. Therefore,

Hashem will surely help you this year beyond the rules of nature."

After this incident, Reb Elazar Tzaddok Turchin became like a new person. He learned thirty pages of *Gemara* a day, in-depth, and he didn't forget anything.

Reb Meir Chadash *zt'l*, the *mashgiach* of *Yeshivas Chevron*, saw how his student, Reb Elazar Tzaddok, was finishing one *masechta* after the other and suspected that he was learning on a superficial level. He tested him, but Reb Elazar Tzaddok knew everything perfectly. Reb Meir Chadash told him, "You know everything wonderfully. Nevertheless, I still maintain that this isn't the way to study Torah. To learn a *masechta b'iyun*, one needs more than just a few days. (Reb

He replied, "I'm not afraid of her, I'm afraid from Hashem, Who commanded us this law."

Meir Chadash didn't know the secret, the reason Reb Elazar Tzaddok Turchin's mind was so open for Torah, beyond the rules of nature.) Despite Reb Meir Chadash's premonitions, Reb Elazar Tzaddok continued studying in this manner, and he became a great Torah scholar. (Years later, he wrote the *sefarim Shoneh Halachos* together with Reb Chaim Kanievsky *shlita*.) The entire Torah was on his fingertips. He became the "go-to" person whenever one sought a Gemara source but didn't remember the page number or the tractate. Reb Elazar would tell them exactly which page and the line they sought. The Gemara was clear in his photographic memory. He could read a line, as it is printed in the Gemara, beginning with *Rashi*, going straight forward on that line to the Gemara and then to *Tosfos* and *Rabbeinu Chananal* printed in the outer margin. He would show such stunts to his students, so they

would also strive to become experts in Shas.

Reb Elazar Tzaddok did one favor for the Tepliker Rav, one *erev* Yom Kippur, but ultimately, he performed the greatest favor for himself. He earned dividends from this *chesed* for the rest of his life.

Rebbe Henoah of Alexander *zt'l* said *chesed* is *mesugal* for bearing children. He explained that in heaven the שערי הולדה, the chambers for bearing children, are sometimes closed. But right nearby is שערי גמילות חסדים, the chambers for deeds of loving-kindness. If the gates to the chambers for children are closed, one can enter through the gates of *gemilus chasadim*, and from there it is easy to jump into the chambers for children.

Rebbe Baruch of Zichlin's *zt'l* came to Rebbe Henoah of Alexander *zt'l* for Shabbos Parashas Noach, and he told the

Rebbe that his son-in-law hadn't yet born children.

Rebbe Henoch told him about the *segulah* of doing *chesed*, to enter from there into the chambers of שערי תולדה. He added that Rashi (6:9) writes, עיקר תולדותיהן של צדיקים, מעשים טובים. This can be translated, עיקר תולדותיהן של צדיקים,

tzaddikim have children, מעשים טובים, in the merit of their *gemilus chasadim*. Therefore, the next *pasuk* states, ויולד נח שלשה בנים את שם ואת יפת ואת יפת "Noach gave birth to three children: Shem, Cham, and Yafes," implying that Noach bore those children because he was involved with *chesed*.⁶

6. The Midrash (*Tanchumah, Noach 2*) explains, "When a person leaves the world without children, he is upset, and he cries. Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells him, 'Why do you cry? Is it because you didn't bear offspring? You have produced something that is better than children.'

"The man asks, 'Ribono shel Olam, what fruit do I have?'

"Hakadosh Baruch Hu replies, 'The Torah, as it states, פרי צדיק עץ חיים, the fruit of the tzaddik is the tree of life.' ... For the offspring of man are his good deeds. As it states about Noach, אלה תולדות נח נח איש, צדיק, [Noach's primary children were his good deeds]."

Hashem created mankind with the ability to speak, and the purpose of speech is certainly in order to help others because one has eyes to see, they are for himself. He has ears to hear, they are also for himself. But one can't speak unless there is someone to speak to. This means speech is for others, and that's the trait that makes man a man. As it states, 2:7) ויהי האדם לנפש חיה and Onkelus translates it, והות באדם לרוח ממלא, "it was in man/ אדם speaking spirit." He became an *adam* when he was able to speak.

A person who helps others is also called an איש, and therefore Noach is called איש צדיק, as we will explain.

At the beginning of the *parashah*, Noach is praised for being a

It states, עולם חסד יבנה, that the world is built on *chesed*. When one does *chesed*, he is building the world.

Consequently, he is rewarded that his personal world is built up with good children.

perfect tzaddik: נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו "Noach was a tzaddik, perfect in his generation." Later in the *parashah*, Hashem tells Noach, כי אתך ראיתי צדיק לפני בדור הזה, "For I see that you are a tzaddik before me in this generation" (7:1). Hashem didn't tell him that he is a צדיק תמים, perfect tzaddik. Rashi explains, מכאן שאומרים מקצת שבחו של, "From this we learn that in the person's presence, one says only part of his praise, and when he isn't present, one tells his entire praise."

The Mekor Baruch asks, Noach's praise was that he was a צדיק תמים: which are two words of praise. When Hashem spoke with Noach, he told him that he is a צדיק, which is one word of praise. So why does Rashi state that one says מקצת שבחו, part of the praise? Rashi should have written that in one's presence one says מחצית שבחו, half of his praise, since Hashem told Noach half his praise.

The Mekor Baruch answers, Noach is praised in the beginning of the *parashah* three ways. For the *parashah* begins, נח איש צדיק תמים היה, בדורותיו, in addition to being a צדיק תמים, Noach was also an איש, which means someone who helps others; someone who cares about others. When Hashem told Noach that he is a tzaddik, that is indeed מקצת שבחו, partial praise, as it is a third of Noach's praises. For Noach's praise is איש צדיק תמים.

The Divrei Chaim *zt'l* wrote to his son-in-law, Reb Moshe Ungar, something around these lines: "You sent to me the information you heard about the boy that was suggested for your daughter. You told me about his scholarly abilities and about his *yichus*, but you left out the main part. You didn't tell me whether he is a *mench*, someone who is kind to others, and will be kind to your daughter. And that is a primary point to find out, because it states (*Devarim* 22:16), את בתי נתתי לאיש, "I gave my daughter to an *ish*, to a *mench*." (The Chebiner Rav *zt'l* often repeated this story.)

Another form of *chesed* that Noach was occupied with was rebuking his generation's people and directing them on the right path. The Seforno writes that in this merit, Noach had children.

It states (6:9-10), אִתְּ הָאֱלֹקִים, הַתְּהִלָּה נָח וְיֹלֵד נָח שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים. The Seforno explains, "Noach followed in Hashem's ways to do kindness for others, for he would rebuke his generation... וְיֹלֵד נָח שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים, 'Noach gave birth to three children...' From the time that Noach began giving *tochachah* (rebuke) to his generation, he merited children. We don't find in the Torah anyone that waited for children as long as Noach did. He was five hundred years old, and he didn't have children yet. But when he began to

rebuke the people of his generation, he bore his three children."

In particular, giving *tzedakah* and giving loans is *mesugal* for bearing children and good children. The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 9:) states, "Whoever is accustomed to giving *tzedakah*, Heaven will give him children who are wise, wealthy, and learned in all parts of the Torah..."

And it states (*Tehillim* 37:26), כָּל הַיּוֹם חוֹנֵן וּמְלוּה וּרְעוּ לְבָרָכָה, "All day long he is compassionate and he lends money, and his children will be blessed..." This hints that by giving *tzedakah* and loans, one merits having good children. (The *Divrei Avraham* said this explanation to the Chasam Sofer *zt'l*, and the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* praised it.)⁷

7. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Vayeirah* א"ה ש"ה) writes, "When a woman gives *tzedakah*, she will merit male children..."

You always gain by helping others.

Reb Moshe Weinbach *shlita*, a renowned *magid* from Beitar Illit,

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* (עשין ב') writes, "It isn't for nothing that the Torah tells the story of Noach, וישת וישכר, ויתגל... וירא חם... ושם ויפת כסו את ערות אביהם, that Noach became drunk and disgraced, and

Shem and Yefes covered him and honored him. Afterward, Noach blessed them, and his blessings took effect. This is to teach us the importance of trying, with all your strength, to

has a good custom; he tries to be among the pall bearers (to carry the *aron*) at *levayos*. (He says that he ripped several jackets and lost more than a few buttons over the years by pushing through the crowds to perform this mitzvah.)

When Reb Shmuel Wosner *zt'l* was *niftar*, Reb Moshe Weinbach wanted to be at the *levayah* of this *gadol*. He missed the last bus from Beitar, so he hired a taxi. He didn't want to miss the opportunity to be at the *levayah* of one of the *gedolei hador*, and he was hoping to merit carrying the *niftar* to his final resting place.

Reb Moshe arrived just when they were about to bring the *niftar* out of the beis medresh. He rushed towards the beis medresh to do his mitzvah, but then he heard someone shouting, "I need air! Help me!" It was the Zlotchover Rebbe. He was stuck in the crush of people and could hardly breathe. At first, Reb Moshe Weinbach thought, "Let other people do this mitzvah and pull him out of the crowd. I have my own mitzvah to perform..." He didn't travel all the way from Beitar to Bnei Brak by taxi, to help this person. However, he listened to his *yetzer tov* and extended his arm to the Rebbe, and led him away from the crowd.

Soon, they were quite distant from the *aron* and Reb Moshe realized that he lost the opportunity to carry the *aron*. Later on it was clear to him that by helping the Zlotchever Rebbe his own life was saved, as due to the large crowds, two people were *rachmana litzlan* trampled to death. Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent a *chesed* his way, to save his life. For whenever one helps others, he is the one who is helped the most.

conceal the shame and disgrace of your fellow man, just as you would care about your own honor."

Torah

It isn't easy to carry the yoke of the Torah. It requires a lot of time, devotion, and to give away from other deeds that we feel we need or want. To encourage us to set times to study Torah, we will discuss some of the phenomenal benefits that we earn when we study Torah.

One is that when we study Torah, we are sustaining the world. And since the world exists in our merit, we can ask Hashem, and Hashem will fulfill our desires.

The Torah begins with the word, בראשית, and this word hints at the purpose of creation. As Rashi writes, בשביל התורה שנקראת ראשית... ובשביל ישראל שנקראת ראשית, the world was created for the Torah and

for Bnei Yisrael who are both called ראשית. The Meor Einayim *zt'l* explains that this means the world was created, so Yidden should study Torah. The *Zohar* (vol.2 161.) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu looked into the Torah, and He created the world." Similarly, when the Jewish nation "looks into the Torah," and they study it, this sustains the world, and creation exists in their merit. As partners in the world, Hashem takes our requests into account.

Chazal say that in Gan Eden צדיקים יושבים ונהנים מזיו השכינה, *tzaddik sit and enjoy pleasure from the shine of the Shechinah.*" זיו השכינה isn't the *Shechinah*; instead, it is a ray, a glow of the *Shechinah* (similar to rays of sunshine, זיו השמש, which although is very bright and illuminating, it isn't the sun itself). In Gan Eden, the connection to Hashem is זיו השכינה, rays of the *Shechinah*. A much greater connection occurs when a Yid studies Torah *in this world*. As Chazal

(Tana d'Bei Eliyahu Rabba 18:2) say, הלומד תורה הקב"ה יושב וישב וישנה כנגדו, "When one studies Torah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu sits and studies opposite him."

Furthermore, Chazal tell us that Hashem and His Torah are one. Thus, when one studies Torah, he is uniting with Hashem, Himself. This is much more than the pleasure and connection experienced in Gan Eden, which is like a ray of the *Shechinah*.

Therefore, Chazal say יפה שעה אחת של תורה ומעשים טובים בעולם הזה מכל חיי העולם הבא, "A moment of Torah and good deeds in this world is better than an entire life in Olam HaBa." In Olam HaBa we connect with זיו השכינה, and in Olam HaZeh, when we study Torah and keep the mitzvos, we are united with the *Shechinah* itself!

Our physical bodies prevent us from recognizing what is happening when we study Torah, but our *neshomos* are aware. The *neshamah* has immeasurable

pleasure from Torah study, particularly from this world. Think about these matters, and you will be very happy each time you study Torah, and it will help you take on the yoke of Torah.

The Tanya (*Likutei Amarim*, ch.4) describes this joy and this connection when a Yid studies Torah. He writes, "Torah is compared to water. Water flows from higher places to lower places. Torah is the same, as its origin is in an exalted, place in heaven...and from there it descends, from level to lower level, until the Torah is dressed in physical matters of this world..."

In other words, most mitzvos are related to the physical existence of this world. For example, we shake the four *minim*, we sit in a *succah*, we blow the shofar, eat matzah, wrap ourselves in a four-cornered garment with tzitzis, all are from material matter. One might think that the Torah

is physical because it discusses these physical matters. Similarly, the Torah is written with ink and parchment, in letters with sizes and shapes – all physical dimensions. Doesn't this mean the Torah and the mitzvos are associated with this world? But these are only how the Torah appears when it descends to this world. But beneath all these layers of physicality is its spiritual core.

The Tanya describes it this way, "Although the Torah is dressed in physical matters, it can be compared to a person hugging the king. There is no difference in the connection, whether one hugs a king wearing one set of clothing or whether one hugs a king wearing many layers of clothing because the king's body is there. Also, when the king hugs him with his right arm..." Therefore, when you study Torah, recognize that it is as if you are hugging the King

himself. The many layers don't detract from this reality.

Therefore, learning Torah in this world is even more significant, and more pleasurable for the *neshamah*, than the pleasures of Gan Eden.

There are many other thoughts to consider that will inspire us to take on the yoke of studying Torah. One of them is to recognize how much we gain in this world from studying Torah. Learning Torah is an elixir for success.

Every morning we say, אלו דברים שאדם אוכל פירותיהם בעולם הזה והקרן קיימת לעולם הבא... ותלמוד תורה כנגד כולם, "These are the matters that man eats the fruits of in this world, and the primary reward is reserved for Olam Haba... and studying Torah is greater than them all." This means, for studying Torah, one receives rewards also in this world.

Some think that the time they invest learning Torah takes away from their financial success, when actually, Chazal (*Avodah Zarah* 19.) tell us, כל העוסק בתורה הקב"ה עושה לו חפציו, "Whoever studies Torah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu fulfills his needs. As it states, כי אם בתורת ה' חפצו, that when one studies Torah, ה' חפצו, Hashem does his will."

At a *siyum* we say, אנו עמלים ומקבלים שכר... אנו רצים לחיי עולם הבא, "We toil [in Torah], and we receive reward... We run to Olam HaBa." These two statements seem repetitious, because isn't earning reward and running to Olam HaBa the same thing?

The Maadany Yom Tov (on the *Rosh*, *Brachos* 4:12:50) replies that the first statement, "We toil, and we receive a reward," refers to the reward that we get in this world. Because when one studies Torah, he is rewarded in this world, too. "We run to Olam HaBa" refers to the rewards

that we will enjoy in Olam HaBa.

Another thought that will inspire us to devote ourselves to Torah study is to recognize that no pleasure in the world compares to the joy of those who study Torah.

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* was telling a group of wealthy people that they will be rewarded immensely because they support Torah. One of the wealthy people answered back with *chutzpah* (as it states [*Mishlei* 18:23], ועשיר יענה עוזה that wealthy people speak with *chutzpah*). He said to the Chofetz Chaim, "Why don't you join me? I will make you a partner in my business. You will become wealthy, and then you will earn the great reward of supporting Torah."

The Chofetz Chaim said, "You're right. My reward in Olam HaBa will be very great, but what about my Olam HaZeh?!" Torah students have

immense pleasure in their studies, and their lives are incomparably full and more enjoyable than those who don't study Torah.

The Chofetz Chaim told him the following vort:

It states (*Devarim* 33:18), שמוח זבולון בצאתך ויששכר באהלך, "Zevulun is happy when he leaves..." The Midrash (quoted in the Alshich) explains that Zevulan is happy *when he leaves this world*. He isn't happy here, in this world, only when he will go to Olam HaBa to get his reward. Whereas, ויששכר באהלך, "Yissachar is happy in his tent," because he is happy in this world, too. Yissachar enjoys the immense pleasure of studying Torah.

Yissachar studies Torah and Zevulun supports him. We would assume that Zevulan has a better Olam HaZeh, but the *pasuk* clarifies that Zevulun will be happy when he leaves the world. Yissachar is happy even now because

he studies Torah in the tents of Torah – and that is the greatest joy.

Also, Dovid HaMelech said, לולי תורתך שעשעי או אברתי בעניי, "If it weren't for Your Torah, my pleasure, I would be lost in my *tzaros*."

The Rokeiach writes, "No wisdom compares to the wisdom of Torah." The Torah's wisdom is much more than mere intellectual pleasure (although that is also there). The wisdom of the Torah is a spiritual pleasure with endless levels. Fortunate are those who experience it!

Acquiring the Crown of Torah

There was once a poor person who suddenly became wealthy. One of his friends kept asking him, "Tell me the secret so that I can do the same. How did you become wealthy?" But the wealthy person refused to tell him.

Once, the wealthy person decided he would give in to his friend's requests. He said, "If you want to know how I became wealthy, come with me." He brought him to the sea. The wealthy man jumped inside, and he told his friend to do the same. The friend didn't know what this has to do with becoming wealthy, but he jumped into the sea, anyway.

The wealthy man forcefully pushed the poor person under the water, and he didn't allow him to lift his head. The poor friend thought he was going to drown. He tried to push his friend's hand off of his head, but the wealthy man was strong, and he held on tight. After a few moments of that torture, the wealthy man finally allowed him to stand up and get out of the water.

"What did you think when you were under the water? Were you thinking about how you could be

wealthy? Obviously, you weren't. Your only thoughts were how to survive. This is the trick of becoming wealthy. You have to have nothing on your mind other than your goal to be wealthy, and then you will succeed. But if you want wealth and also other matters, you won't succeed."

For us, this is a lesson on acquiring the crown of Torah. The way to acquire the crown of Torah is to let Torah knowledge be your only focus. If you want Torah and also honor and pleasures, you won't succeed.

As the Rambam (*Talmud Torah* 3:6) states, מי שנשאף לכו לקים מצוה זו כראוי ולהיות מכתר בכתר תורה לא יסיה דעתו לדברים אחרים ולא ישם אל לבו, שיקנה תורה תורה עם העשר והכבוד כאחת, "Someone who desires to keep this mitzvah properly, to acquire the crown of Torah, he must focus solely on Torah, and turn his thoughts away from all other ambitions. One shouldn't think that he will

acquire Torah, and wealth and honor..." Hashem will give him wealth and honor, too, *be'ezras Hashem*, but that shouldn't be his intention. His focus should be only on knowing Torah, and then he will succeed.

The Rambam (ibid. 3:12) also states, "Torah doesn't exist with those who study it with laziness, and not among those who study amidst pleasure, and food and drink. Rather, one must kill himself over Torah... Our sages say that whoever studies Torah in the beis medresh won't forget it quickly... Furthermore, whoever says the words of Torah out loud will remember his Torah. But those who study in silence will quickly forget what they learned."

Tefillah

There are two translations of the word תיבה. In this week's *parashah*, תיבה is the ark that Noach built. But תיבה also means a word. The Magid of Mezritz *zt'l* says that תיבה hints to words of Torah and *tefillah*. The Torah says (7:1), בא אתה וכל ביתך אל התיבה, "Come, you and your entire household into the *teivah*..." The Magid explains, צריך אתה לבוא עם כל הגוף וכל רמ"ח אברך עם כל החושים אל התיבה של התפילה, "You must place your whole body, all your 248 limbs, and all your senses into the words of your *tefillah*."

Tefillah requires effort. The mind wants to wander. You have to focus and put all your strength into *tefillah*.⁸

8. The next words of the *pasuk* are, כי אותך ראיתי צדיק לפני, "Because I see that you are a tzaddik." The Magid explains, כי אותך ראיתי צדיק וכו', לכן אתה תבוא, כי מי שאינו קדוש וטהור לא יוכל לבוא אל התיבה, כידוע שתיבת נח לא קלטה רק אותם שלא שחתו את דרכם, "You are a tzaddik, therefore you can come [into the words of *tefillah*]. Because when one isn't *kadosh* and *tahor* he won't succeed to enter into the תיבות [words of *tefillah*]. This is

The Magid of Mezritz writes in *Toras HaMagid*:

"It states, צהר תעשה לתיבה, 'illuminate the תיבה'; I heard that Rabbeinu HaKadosh, Reb Dov Ber of Mezritz, explained that when one doesn't pray with *kavanah* he says the *tefillah* in darkness. But when one davens with *kavanah*... every word of his *tefillah* shines. The Torah urges, צהר תעשה לתיבה, let every word of your *tefillah* shine with your good *kavanah*."

"The chassid, the *magid*, Reb Dov Ber *zt'l*, taught: One should think about how his life and that of his wife and children are dependent on *tefillah* -

especially on the *tefillos* of the *yamim norai'im*. Our entire *chiyus* is dependent on proper *tefillos*..." The Magid explains that this is the meaning of the *pasuk* (6:18), ובאת אל התיבה אתה ובניך ואשתך, "Come into the words: You, your sons, your wife, and your son's wife with you." Your entire family is dependent on your *tefillos*.

On the words, צא מן התיבה, "Leave the תיבה" the Magid explains that there are times when one should leave the words of *tefillah*, and instead cry out to Hashem with all one's heart, without saying words. This is also a form of *tefillah*.⁹

like the *teivah* that didn't permit the animals who sinned to enter the *teivah*."

This is based on the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 108:, and *Rashi* 6:20) which states that the *teivah* only accepted animals who weren't involved in sin. If an animal wasn't clean from sin, the *teivah* didn't accept it. Similarly, if a person isn't worthy and pure from sin, he will have a hard time davening. He will be cast out of the תיבה of *tefillah*, like the *teivah* that didn't accept animals which weren't pure.

9. It states (8:1), ויזכור אלקים את נח... ויכלא הגשם מן השמים, "Elokim remembered

In review, the Magid of Mezritz teaches that from the word **הינה** we can learn that: (1) One should pray with all his 248 limbs, with all his heart and soul. (2) One should illuminate the words of his *tefillah* by *davening* with *kavanah*. (3) One's life, and the life of his family, is dependent on his *tefillah*, especially on the *yamim nora'im tefillos*. (4) Sometimes one should pray without words. It's a *tefillah* of yearning and

Noach ...and the rain stopped." The *pasuk* uses Hashem's name **אלקים**, which is Hashem's name of harsh justice. Rashi explains, **זה השם מרת הדין הוא, ונהפכה למדת רחמים על ידי תפלת הצדיקים**, "This name is for justice. It turned into compassion because of the *tefillos* of tzaddikim."

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* asks, where do we see that Noach prayed the flood should cease?

He said that it is alluded to in the *pasuk* (7:23), **וישאר אך נח**. Rashi explains, **גונג וכוהה דם ממורה הבהמות והחיות**, "Noach was moaning...due to his hard toil, feeding the animals." The Gemara discusses the hardships Noach went through to feed the animals in the *teivah*. Some animals eat at night and some by day, and Noach and his family had to care for all of them. Once, he was bitten by a lion, because he brought the food late. Rebbe Bunim of Pshescha *zt'l* says that even if Noach didn't pray with words, his broken heart was like a prayer before Hashem. His heart was shouting, "Hashem, Save me. I can't manage." Those silent *tefillos* roused Hashem's compassion, ended the flood, and set Noach free from the *teivah*.

When a poor person comes to the door we sometimes request to see his *hamlatzah*, a reference from a known rabbi, attesting that he is indeed needy. But when a person comes to the door with ripped clothing, he doesn't need to show an approbation to prove that he's poor. The poverty shouting by his very appearance. This describes the *tefillah* of a broken heart. Even without words, the circumstance itself is like a loud shout before Hashem.

pleading with all one's heart and soul to Hashem.

Pray for Everything

The Gemara (*Brachos* 26:) teaches that עמידה, פגיעה, שיחה all are synonyms for *tefillah*. The *roshei teivos* of these three words is שפ"ע. This hints that when one prays, he draws down Hashem's bounty.

In this covid-19 era, people are gradually becoming accustomed to living with less, too. Some *chasunos* are being held in very humble settings, and often, people attending these weddings relate that the joy was greater than usual.

The following story happened before the covid-19 era, though it could probably happen today, as well.

A poor father sought ways to cut corners and spend only on what was necessary so that the wedding wouldn't be too

expensive for him. One of the places he thought to cut out was the *kallah* chair. He explained to his daughter that he didn't have enough money to rent it, and it wasn't a necessity. She disagreed. She felt it was necessary because all her friends had a *kallah* chair at their weddings, but what could she do?

Her father said, "I'm your father, and I'm unable to help you. But you have a Father in heaven Who can help you. Ask Him for a *kallah* chair."

She did just that. She cried as she said *Tehillim* and prayed for a *kallah* chair.

When they came to the *chasunah*, there was a *kallah* chair waiting for her! No one knew how it got there, but she didn't wait to ask. Ecstatically she sat down on the *kallah* chair, and greeted her guests. She cried from joy. The chair was even more beautiful

than the chairs her friends had.

Soon enough, the mystery was solved. There was another *chasunah* hall on a different floor; they ordered the *kallah* chair. Accidentally, or rather, by *hashgachah pratis*, the chair was delivered to the wrong floor. The date was the 20th of Sivan. The family that ordered the chair was waiting until nighttime (כ"א ב"ן) before they made the chuppah (because the 20th of Sivan is a fast day in some communities, commemorating the massacres of ת"ח ת"ט while the poor family had their chuppah by daytime, before *shkiyah*. Thus, both brides were able to use the same *kallah* chair.

Some could argue that a *kallah* chair is trivial compared to many other important things that one should daven for. Perhaps that's true, but it is important to daven for trivial matters too because there is nothing that we shouldn't daven for. And

when we pray, all our needs can be fulfilled with tefillah.

Chassidim once heard Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* pray, "Hashem! Please! Let our maid return..." His students thought: "Certainly, the Rebbe has some deep intentions in mind."

The chassidim asked him to explain the meaning of this prayer.

He replied, "The *tefillah* was exactly as it sounded. My wife needs help. Recently, the maid left. So I prayed that the maid should return" (*Divrei Shmuel*). The Rebbe understood that for all one's needs — the small and the large — one should turn to Hashem.

In the tefillos of *yamim nora'im* we say, קדוש אתה ונורא שמך, "Hashem, You are holy and awesome. It doesn't seem correct that we should turn to you for trivial matters. However, אין אלוה

מבלעדך, there is no other G-d other than You, Hashem. So, where should we turn for our needs, if not to Hashem?

A family moved to a new home, and a wise ten-year-old was angry with the contractor and builders. He said, "Why did they make the counters so high? If I want to get myself a cup of coffee, I have to ask an adult to help me. And why are the outlets so high? I can't plug anything in on my own without an adult doing it for me."

But when he became older, he realized that this was purposely planned so the young children shouldn't get hurt. It isn't safe when young children can get to the kitchen appliances and the outlets easily.

This story is a reminder of the importance of *tefillah*. Sometimes we are upset when we see something is missing in our lives. It is missing for a purpose because this is something that you shouldn't get on your own. You have to ask it from Hashem, and then you will get it.¹⁰

Counsels for *Tefillah*

Last week's *parashah* states, ויהי האדם לנפש חיה, "Adam was a living soul" (*Bereishis* 2:7). Onkelus translates it, לנפש ממללא, "a speaking soul." This means that man's essence is his ability to speak.

But when Adam was created, he was alone. Chavah wasn't created yet. There was no one to speak to. It must be that man was created to speak with

10. The Chazon Ish ז"ל (*Maaseh Ish* vol.7 103) would say: Sometimes one must do *hishtadlus* with deeds too. But if one does *hishtadlus* with deeds but he doesn't daven, he hasn't completed his obligation for *hishtadlus*, for the primary *hishtadlus* is *tefillah*.

Hashem. The purpose of his creation is to pour out his heart in *tefillah*.

A counsel that helps people have *kavanah* is to think that there is only you and Hashem, and no one else.

The Chareidim says this idea is hinted to in the words of, אני והו' הושיעה נא. This means that it's אני והו' only myself and Hashem. "Even when I am among other people, nevertheless, since no one sees the secrets of my heart other than Hashem; and no one is seeking to help me other than Hashem, and no one can save me from my *tzaros* other than Hashem; therefore the people around don't interfere. It is like they aren't there, and there is only Hashem and me... This is the implication of אני

והו', there is only me and Hashem, הושיע נא, and when one prays with this thought in mind, salvation will come through his *tefillah*."¹¹

The Mesilas Yesharim (19) writes, "When one prays one should think... that he is standing before the King of kings and praying to Him... As *Chazal* (*Brachos* 28:) state, וכשאתה מתפלל, דע לפני מי אתה מתפלל, 'When you pray, know before Whom you are standing'... Know that you are standing before the Creator, and you are speaking with Him, although no eye can see Him... Someone with a straight mind, and with a drop of contemplation, can plant this truth into his heart - that he is literally speaking with Hashem, begging from Him, and Hashem harkens to his

11. Rabbeinu b'Chaya (*Kad HaKemach*, beginning of *Erech Tefillah*) writes, "The power of *tefillah* is very great; it annuls decrees... *Tefillah* is greater *nevuah*; above the place from where *nevuah* emanates to the *nevi'im*..."

words, as when one is speaking to his friend."

A non-religious Yid walked into the yeshiva in Kfar Chassidim when they were davening *Minchah*. After davening, people asked him what his impressions were. He replied, "I saw *bachurim* swaying back and forth. But this old man was standing near the wall [that was Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l*] and it appeared that he was truly speaking with someOne..." This is how *tefillah* should appear, with *Emunah* and recognition that you are speaking with Hashem.

עשה למען שמך

A *segulah* for the *tefillos* to be answered is to pray for Hashem's honor. For example, when one prays for *parnassah*, one can express in his *tefillos* that if Hashem gives him *parnassah*, he will have more time to learn Torah. When the *tefillah* is for

Hashem's honor, his *tefillos* will be answered.

After the sin of the *meraglim*, Hashem contemplated destroying the Jewish nation. Moshe saved them with his *tefillos*. He prayed for essentially two points: (a) If Hashem destroys the nation it will create a *chillul Hashem*, because the nations of the world will think that Hashem doesn't have the power to bring them into Eretz Yisrael. (b) Moshe said, ה' ארך אפיים ורחב חסד, that Hashem should have compassion on the Jewish nation.

Hashem replied, מלחתי כדברך, "I forgive them, as you said," and Rashi writes, "Because of what you said that the nations of the world will say that Hashem doesn't have the power to bring them into Eretz Yisrael..." It was specifically that prayer that saved them and not the prayer that Hashem should have *rachmanus* on them.

The Tchebiner Rav said, מצוה לפרסם, it's a mitzvah to publicize this Rashi, so people will know to pray for Hashem's honor, and then their *tefillos* will be answered.

After *Shemonah Esrei* we say, עשה למען שמך עשה למען ימינך, עשה, למען תורתך, עשה למען קדושתך, "Answer us for Your name's sake, for Your right arm, for Your Torah, for Your holiness." The *poskim* teach that when one says these words נעשה רעש גדול למעלה, "It rouses a great commotion in heaven." The *Tur* (122) states that those who are cautious with this *tefillah*, זוכה ומקבל פני שכינה, will merit welcoming and receiving the face of the *Shechinah*."

The Likutei Chaver ben Chaim (*Noach*) explains that the specialness of this *tefillah* is that after saying *Shemonah Esrei*, we request that Hashem should answer our *tefillos* for His honor; for His sake; and that is a very special *tefillah*.

The first letters of שמך, (from this קדושתך תורתך, תורה, קדושתך *tefillah*) spell קשתי. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Toras Moshe, Noach*, אה קשתי) would say every year that this is hinted at in the *pasuk*, אה "I placed My rainbow נתתי בענן (קשתי) in the cloud."

The Chasam Sofer didn't explain his intention, but the Chasam Sofer's student, Likutei Chaver ben Chaim, explains that it states (*Eichah* 3:44), סכות בענן לך מעבור תפילה, that since the Churban Beis HaMikdash, there's a cloud in heaven, which prevents the *tefillos* from going up. As *Chazal* say, "From when the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, the gates of *tefillah* are closed." The *pasuk* is hinting, את קשתי נתתי בענן, that this cloud can be penetrated and the *tefillos* will go up when one prays in the form of קשתי, *roshei teivos* for ימינך, שמך, תורתך, קדושתך. Because when one prays for Hashem's honor, the *tefillos* will penetrate the cloud and go up before Hashem's throne.

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