

VAYOMER ELIYAHU

Inspiration and Encouragement on Topics of Trust and Faith in Hashem Yisborach
Based on the Weekly Torah Portion

By Rabbi Eli Meyer Smith Shlit"א
Rosh Hakollel of Bais Ulfana Lehoroa »
«Email rabbi@yeshivasrebchaimozer.com

In English



בס"ד

When Someone Genuinely Believes and Trusts in Hashem, Nothing Can Stand in His Way!

» Why Was The Miracle of Kefitzas Haderech Necessary?

The verse in this week's Parshah (Bereishis 24:66) states: "And the servant told Yitzchok all the things that he had done." Rashi explains: "He revealed to him the miracles that were brought for him, that the earth had shrunk for him (kefitzas haderech) and that Rivkah had come to him as a result of his prayer."

The Medrash says that he told him about the kefitzas haderech, but does not say that he told him that Rivkah came as a result of his prayers. Rashi, however, adds that he said this as well. Where did he know this from?

It seems that Rashi was bothered by a question: Why was the miracle of kefitzas haderech necessary? Why did Hashem have to shrink the earth for Eliezer to arrive faster? What difference would it have made if he got there a little later?

The answer is that Eliezer had davened to Hashem and asked that the first girl to come towards him should be Yitzchok's wife. For this tefillah to be fulfilled, Rivkah needed to be there to approach him as soon as he finished davening. In order to make this happen, Hashem performed the miracle of kefitzas haderech so that Eliezer would be at the well exactly at the moment when Rivkah was there.

Thus, Rashi is explaining the reason for the miracle of kefitzas haderech by saying that he davened for Yitzchok's wife to appear, and he had to be in the right place for the prayer to be fulfilled.

» Why Did Eliezer Say That He Had Done The Miracles?

The verse (ibid) says that Eliezer told Yitzchok "all the things that he had done." This is hard to understand. Did he tell Yitzchok that he did the miracle of shrinking the earth? Did he say that he brought Rivkah to him on

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"צ אלחנן
יוסף בן שמואל

his own? Of course, Hashem did these things, not him. So why does it say that he said that he did them?

We may further ask that Chazal (Bereishis Rabbah 60:1) cite the verse in Yeshaya (50:10) that says: "Who amongst you fears Hashem, listens to the voice of his servant." "Who amongst you fears Hashem" – this is Eliezer, servant of Avrohom. "Listens to the voice of his servant" – to the voice of Avrohom, who was a servant to the Holy One Blessed be He, as it is stated (Bereishis 26:24), "Because of Avrohom, My servant." He went with alacrity when he went to bring Rivkah and it wasn't light for him. And who shone the light onto him? The Holy One enlightened him with winds and lightning. He trusted in the Name of Hashem and he relied on his G-d. And he said, "Hashem, G-d of my master Avrohom."

We see from that the Medrash describes Eliezer as walking in darkness. He did not know how to escape from the darkness on his own and fulfill his mission.

We may ask what this darkness was. Didn't Eliezer have a clear mission to travel to Aram, to the family of Avrohom, and to find a wife for Yitzchok there? Why did he feel so despondent and why did he need to pray for help with his mission?

The Ohr Hachaim asks further: Avrohom Avinu had already prayed to Hashem, and told Eliezer (24:7), "He will send His angels before you." If so, why did Eliezer need to pray? Was something lacking in Avrohom's prayer?.

» The Great Power of Bitachon!

Dovid Hamelech states (Tehilim 37:3-4): "Trust in Hashem and do good; dwell in the land and be nourished by faith. And you delight in Hashem and He will give you what your heart desires."

The Brisker Rov zt"l explains that one can achieve anything he desires through the middah of bitachon. If one has such strong bitachon that he "delights in Hashem", then Hashem will give him whatever his heart

desires. This is also seen from numerous other verses, including (ibid:5-7): “Commit your way to Hashem and trust in Him and He will act. And He will reveal your righteousness like the light, and your judgments like noon. Wait for Hashem and hope for Him...” Chazal (Gittin 7A) explain that if a person has enemies who want to harm him, he should wait quietly, and Hashem will take care of it for him. The more bitachon one has, the more Hashem will pay him back and take care of his needs.

Therefore, Dovid Hamelech says (Tehilim 13:6): “I trusted in Your kindness. My heart will rejoice in Your salvation.” He trusted in Hashem completely and recognized that He was the only power in the world and always acts kindly. Because he reached this recognition his heart “rejoiced in Your salvation.”

Sefer Degel Machaneh Efraim (Vayishlach) relates that his grandfather, the Baal Shem tov, was able to ascend to great heights, even without uttering any mystical names. He simply put on his gartel and scended, explaining that he was able to do so because of his high level of emunah.

Sefer M’ohr Vashemesh adds that he heard from the Rebbe of Neshchitz that through the power of emunah, one can revive the dead, transform silver into gold, and change the laws of nature. Furthermore, one who has true emunah will never be afraid of anything and cannot be harmed by anyone. He notes that the root of the word “Emunah” is “amon”, which means to draw (as in Mishlei 8:30). This indicates that through emunah, one can draw Hashem’s kindness towards himself.

» How Much Emunah is a Person Expected to Have?

Every individual person is expected to reach a high level of emunah. The prophet Yeshaya (50:10) says: “Who amongst you fears Hashem, listens to the voice of His servant? He walked in darkness with no light for himself. Let him trust in the Name of Hashem and rely upon G-d.”

Rashi explains that one who has true emunah in Hashem even if he “walks in darkness”, meaning that he goes through a difficult time, he cannot be harmed. The prophet is demanding this level of emunah from us all, and he guarantees that Hashem will provide us with salvation if we reach this level.

The Kedushas Levi (Beshalach) writes a great lesson

on the topic of emunah. He says: Chazal say (Niddah 31A) that one who has a miracle performed for him doesn’t recognize the miracle. We can explain this to mean that one in need of salvation should believe that Hashem will help him so strongly that he doesn’t view this as a miracle. He should realize that Hashem can do anything, and have so much emunah and bitachon that he does not consider it miraculous for Hashem to help him in unforeseen ways. He should view Hashem’s salvation as “natural”, rather than as a miracle.

He adds that if someone has genuine emunah, he sees no difference between Hashem telling oil to ignite or telling vinegar to ignite. For Hashem, anything is possible and nothing is at all difficult. Therefore, it is not at all difficult for Him to change nature, and even miracles are natural.

We find in the Gemara (Tainus 25a) the story of the daughter of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, who was once despondent because she accidentally filled the holders for the Shabbos lights with vinegar instead of oil. He told her: “My daughter, what is the difference? The One who said oil should burn can say that vinegar should burn.”

Rebbi Chanina ben Dosa had risen to a very lofty spiritual level. He reached such an exalted level that the natural and supernatural were no different to him. He knew that both the natural and supernatural were really only the will of Hashem. Therefore, for him, vinegar could burn as well as oil could. He knew that the only reason oil burns is because Hashem wants it to. Therefore, if Hashem desires, vinegar can burn as well as oil can.

This is the source of the famous segulah of Rav Chaim of Volozhin, which he writes in Nefesh Hachaim (Shar 3, Perek 12): “A great concept and a wondrous remedy to remove and annul from upon oneself all judgments and the desires of others to harm him and to disable them from hurting him or making any blemish in

him is when a person establishes in his heart to say: Hashem is the true G-d. There is nothing besides Him. There is no other power in this or any other world. Everything is full solely with His Omnipresence, may His Name be blessed.

“And one should totally remove from his heart and pay no attention at all to any other force or will in the world. And he should subjugate himself and attach himself with pure thoughts purely for The Singular Master, may His Name be blessed. Then, He will provide

... “Since the kefitzas haderech and other miracles had occurred as a result of his great level of emunah and bitachon, it was considered as if he was the one who had performed the miracle on his own. He was the one who had reached this lofty level of bitachon...”

for his needs. All other forces and wills will automatically be annulled from upon him and will be unable to affect him at all.”

Rav Chaim used this segulah in times of danger, and he always merited being saved from harm in miraculous ways.

This also explains the Mishnah that explains that after Klal Yisroel sinned by complaining against Hashem, they were struck with a plague. They were then commanded to make a copper snake and look at it. The Mishnah (Rosh Hashana 29A) says that the point of making a serpent on a pole was to cause the nation to look upwards towards Heaven and recognize that Hashem is the One who decides who lives and who dies. By looking upwards to Hashem, they came to realize that He is the only power and the source of everything, and this led to their salvation.

The Chazon Ish writes that one should not be scared even if it seems that according to the laws of nature there is a majority chance that something bad is about to happen to him. Rather, he should not worry about the percentages and consider it as if he has a 50-50 chance of success, because nature does not rule over us. Again, the explanation of his words is that Hashem rules over the world and causes everything to occur. The rules of nature do not matter to Him. He can change them at any time. If we truly believe that, it makes no difference if natural probability is against us. We will know that He can and will change nature to help us.

» ***Why Was Rebbe Punished For Sending a Calf to Slaughter?***

The Gemara states (Bava Metziah 85A): “There was a calf that was being led to slaughter. It went and hid its head under the corner of the cloak of Rebbe and cried. Rebbe told it, ‘Go. For this is why you were created.’ It was said (in the Heavens), ‘Since you did not have pity on it, you shall be stricken with sufferings.’”

The Mashgiach, Hagaon Hatzadik Rav Nosson Wachtfogel zt”l, asked: What was the complaint against Rebbe? Doesn’t the Gemara say (Brachos 17A): “The end of an animal is slaughter”? Is everyone who slaughters an animal liable to be punished with suffering?

Sefer Zechor L’Miriam (Perek 20) brings proof to the greatness of the trait of bitachon, trust in Hashem Yisborach, from the story of Lot and the angels that came to his home. The men of Sodom came to kill them and Lot went out and asked them not to harm them because “for this they came to the shelter of my walls”.

Lot was saying that these guests had trusted him that he could and would protect them and he therefore was requesting that they be spared and not harmed because they had placed their trust in him and he therefore was

responsible for their welfare and could not allow them to be hurt.

We know very well that Lot was not a righteous man. The verse states (Bereishis 13): “And Lot turned from kedem, the east.” Chazal explain that the word “kedem” can also be explained to mean that Lot turned away from “the ancient origin of the world” – meaning that he turned away from Hashem Yisborach. Still and all, he believed that he must protect those people that placed their trust in him. It is thus absolutely certain that Hashem Yisborach, the source of all mercy and compassion, will definitely help and protect anyone who sincerely places their trust in Him.

With this insight, Rav Nosson zt”l answers that it is certainly true that every animal’s end is to be slaughtered and there is no complaint whatsoever against one who slaughters an animal. However, if a calf escapes his slaughterer and takes refuge under one’s cloak and trusts him to save and protect it, the trait of compassion requires him to guard it and protect it. This was the complaint against Rebbe.

» ***When One Does Hashem’s Will, He is Considered to Have Done The Miracles By Himself!***

The Gemara states (Yoma 28b) that Eliezer “drew and gave to drink (mashkeh) to others of Avrohom’s Torah teachings.” The Yalkut says that he was one of the few people who entered Gan Eden alive.

We see that Eliezer was not a simple servant. Rather, he was a truly great man. It is certain that when he went to find a wife for Yitzchok, he knew that the entire future of Klal Yisroel depended on his mission. Still and all, he went with full emunah and bitachon in Hashem and he did not rely on Avrohom’s prayers at all. He relied only on Hashem and trusted solely in Him to provide the wife who would become the mother of Klal Yisroel.

This is Chazal’s intent when they say that he went in darkness. He did not have any natural plan to find a girl to marry Yitzchok. Instead, he closed his eyes and relied on Hashem completely. He trusted in Him to send the right girl. In this merit, Hashem led him to find Rivkah. He merited kefitzas haderech to arrive in Charan at the exact right time in the merit of his complete and total bitachon in Hashem.

This explains why Eliezer said that he had done the miracle, as if he had done it himself. Since the kefitzas haderech and other miracles had occurred as a result of his great level of emunah and bitachon, it was considered as if he was the one who had performed the miracle on his own. He was the one who had reached this lofty level of bitachon. Therefore, it was as if he was the one who had done the miracle.