

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Vayechi



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Torah Wellsprings - Vayechi

Bitachon

There is a powerful phrase in this week's parashah that teaches us bitachon (49:18) לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה': "For your salvation, I hope, Hashem."

Bitachon is so crucial and essential that the theme of bitachon is repeated many times throughout Tanach, especially in Tehillim. For example, it states (Tehillim 32:10) וְהוֹבִטָה בָּהּ חֶסֶד יְסֻבְּבוּ "As for him who trusts in Hashem, kindness will encompass him."

בְּאֱלֹקִים בִּטַּחֲתִי לֹא אִירָא מָה יַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם (Tehillim 56:12) "In Hashem I trusted, I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

אֲךָ לְאֱלֹקִים דּוּמִי נַפְשִׁי כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ תְקוּוֹתִי, (Tehillim 62:6-7) "Only to Hashem should you hope, my soul, for my hope is from Him. Only He is my Rock and my salvation; my stronghold, I shall not falter." הוֹשֶׁעַ עַבְדְּךָ אֶתָּה אֱלֹקֵי הַבּוֹטָה אֵלַי (Tehillim 86:2) "Save Your servant – You, my G-d – who trusts in You."

Dovid HaMelech suffered many tzaros and yesurim, but his bitachon gave him

hope. Throughout Tehillim, Dovid HaMelech teaches us that the only way to live through hard times is to have bitachon in Hashem. Hashem can do anything, and He can save us from our tzaros.

One should never lose hope. Even if he has great tzaros, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is greater than his problems, and Hashem can bring light and salvation. The main thing is to be wise and to say, לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה', and to trust and to rely on Hashem.

בְּמַחֲוֵה בָהּ עַדִּי עַד כִּי בִי"ה ה' (Yeshayah 26:4) "Trust in Hashem forever, for Hashem, is the Rock of the worlds." Chazal (Menachos 29:) learn from this pasuk that, "Whoever trusts in Hashem, Hashem will protect him in this world and the next world."

When one loses hope, he feels like he is in prison, without a window of light. But when one has bitachon, it is as if a large window opened up in his prison, and the light of hope shines to every corner. The darkness ebbs away as though it was never there.¹

1. The following is a letter we received. The writer begins by explaining that his work was affected by the war in Eretz Yisrael, and he is earning less money. He writes, "I had to deposit 14,000 shekels in the bank to cover a credit card bill. Worried about my financial situation, immediately upon awakening in the morning, I traveled to Meron, to the kever of the Tana Reb Shimon bar Yochai, and I davened Shacharis there. After Shacharis, I approached the tzion and said from the depths of my heart, "Reb Shimon, I need 14,000 shekels today. It must be deposited into my account before night. I have already borrowed money from all my friends, and I don't have a way to cover this debt. I don't have whom to turn to. I have already exhausted all paths of *hishtadlus*. Therefore, I request that Reb Shimon daven for me, that my financial situation should get sorted out and all the bank charges should be covered."

"Then I had an inner struggle. Should I still try to somehow find 14,000 shekel, or should I not ask anyone for help and instead rely that my tefillos and requests in Meron will be sufficient?

Baruch Hashem, I fortified myself with bitachon and decided not to ask anyone for help – I trusted in Hashem.

A wonder occurred – a miracle from heaven. One o'clock in the afternoon, a client called me. He owed me 50,000 shekels from a half-year ago. Lately, I had stopped asking him for the money because my numerous requests hadn't accomplished anything. But now this person called me on his own! He said, 'I have 14,300 shekels (not the entire debt, but the amount I needed just then). Tell me how I can deposit it into your bank account.'

Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin zt'l said that if a person is in a difficult situation, he should say *לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּי ה'*. If the problem is more severe, he should say, *קוּיָּי ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ*. And if the situation is desperate, he should say *ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּי*. His intention is that one should repeat these ideas of bitachon in Hashem, and he will have his salvation.

Reb Shlomo Kalish zt'l was once with Reb Chaim of Brisk zt'l at shalosh seudos, and he heard Reb Chaim Brisker saying to himself, for around twenty minutes, *לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּי ה'* with concentration and with hislahavus.

The Shaarei Teshuvah (end of siman 118) writes, "The Mahari Tzemech z"l writes, "When I say in Shemonah Esrei *קוּיָּי ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ* 'For your salvation, we trust all day,' I think that I am awaiting Hashem's salvation because Hashem saves us so many times – every day and every moment. Several times, I found this to be very beneficial when I was in a tzarah."

The Chida (Etzba Ketanah) asks, why do we say these words in Shemonah Esrei: *קוּיָּי ה' לִישׁוּעָתְךָ* "For your salvation we trust all day?" If one is worthy of salvation, he will receive it even if he isn't hoping for it. And if he isn't worthy of salvation, how will waiting and hoping for salvation save him? The Chida answers that awaiting and trusting in Hashem's salvation is a merit, and through this merit, he can become worthy of salvation. The Midrash (Yalkut

Tehillim) says, "Even if Yisrael's only merit is that they trust in Him, it is sufficient for them to have the geulah. This is the meaning of *לִישׁוּעָתְךָ*, to merit a yeshuah, *קוּיָּי ה'*, I trust in Hashem."

In this brachah, we request *את צמח דוד מהרה*, that Hashem bring us the redemption of Moshiach ben Dovid. If we don't deserve it, *כי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָּי ה'*, we trust in Hashem, and in that merit, we request that Hashem bring the geulah.²

Hashem Gives Parnassah

Yaakov Avinu said (48:15) *הָאֱלֹקִים בְּרוּעָה אוֹתִי* "Hashem Who sustained me as long as I am alive, until this day." The Gemara (Pesachim 118.) says that this means Hashem gave him parnassah. The word *הָרֹעָה* can imply that Hashem is like a shepherd who gives food to his sheep. This illustrates how Hashem sustains us and provides each person with his parnassah.

Sefer Taam v'Daas explains that the Torah compares Hashem sustaining us to a shepherd who feeds his animals (as it states *הָרֹעָה*). Just like animals don't know how to get their food, so it is with people. As it states (Koheles 9:11) *לֹא לַחֲכָמִים לֶחֶם*, "neither do the wise have bread." Some very wise people don't have parnassah, and some people aren't especially smart and yet are incredibly wealthy. So, we see it isn't up to man but to Hashem.³

I gave him my banking information, and soon afterwards, he deposited the funds. This filled the hole in my account." Through emunah and bitachon, he merited salvation.

2. We say the brachah *הַנוֹתֵן לְשֹׂכֵי בֵּינָה לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה*, "Who gives the rooster understanding to distinguish between day and night." But behold, all animals know the difference between day and night! The uniqueness of a rooster is that it knows when it is still night that day is approaching. When one goes through dark, hard times, he should remember that day is coming – better and brighter times are arriving. That will give him the strength to endure the darkness of the present and to hope for a better tomorrow.

3. We heard an amazing story from the baal hamaaseh:

Every day, the person in our story goes around the batei midrashim collecting money, offering people the merit of giving tzedakah. Every day, he collects somewhere between seven and eight hundred shekels. When Fridays are short, he doesn't go collecting. Last year, erev Shabbos Mikeitz, he planned to daven shacharis with a minyan that begins at 8:15, but since he came late, he decided to wait for the next minyan.

He preferred to daven at his regular pace rather than having to rush to keep up with the 8:15 minyan.

As he was waiting for the next minyan to begin, Hashem arranged that he should see one of these pamphlets (Be'er HaParashah/Torah Wellsprings). He opened it and saw the words of the Ramban: הגזירה אמת והחריצות שקר, Hashem's decree is accurate, and a person's cleverness is false. He read that hishtadlus isn't the source of parnassah. Hishtadlus is a decree that one must do, but even without hishtadlus, a person will receive the parnassah destined for him. This man thought to himself, "I believe in Hashem, but I don't understand how I can earn seven or eight hundred shekels a day without putting out my hand and asking for money. If I don't do anything, how will I have parnassah?"

When the tefillah was over, a wealthy man came over to him and gave him eight hundred shekels. This was the first time this man came to him on his own to give him money without being asked. Heaven showed him that הגזירה אמת, Hashem's decree is the truth and will occur. והחריצות שקר, the notion that it's my wisdom, talent, or work that earns me parnassah is false. Hakadosh Baruch Hu can send him parnassah without him doing anything at all.

The story also reminds us of the Midrash, אין אדם שיומנו לי ומופסיד, that when a person obeys Hashem, he never loses. This man chose to daven at the next minyan, not to rush the tefillah, and it was at that next minyan that the wealthy person approached him. He gained by doing the right thing.

There is a unique Kollel in Yerushalayim, in the Kiryas Menachem neighborhood. The Kollel is called Ohel Malka, and it opened in the year תשל"ט. The yungerleit study all day, and at the end of the day, they go out, each to a different address or beis medresh, to give drashos and teach Torah to the less-religious and less-learned people in the area.

Their beis medresh, where they studied all day long, was in a caravan (prefab structure). But after twenty years of use, there were holes in the walls, which cats used as an entrance, etc. It was time to build a proper beis medresh for the scholars. The city council gave their consent. Now all that was missing was money. The head of the Kollel was Reb Yisrael Yaakov Weisfish zt'l. (He was niftar a few weeks ago, on motzei Shabbos parashas Toldos.) Sixty years ago, gedolei Yisrael sent Reb Yisrael Yaakov to be mikarev Yidden to their Father in heaven because they recognized his refined middos and his ability to connect with all types of people. The fundraiser for this kiruv organization was Reb Chaim Shaul Eizenstat, Reb Yisrael Yaakov's brother-in-law. Reb Yisrael Yaakov sent his brother-in-law, Reb Chaim Shaul, to raise money for the new building they hoped to establish.

Time passed, and they remained at the same place. Reb Weisfish was bothered by the chillul Hashem. He said that there are buildings and money for all matters; why shouldn't there be money for a house for Hashem? He said that the lack of funds was affecting his health and well-being.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, Yisrael Yaakov said to his children, "Rosh Hashanah is approaching, and a primary theme of Rosh Hashanah is that we pray that Hashem's glory be revealed over the world, and Hashem's honor should increase. I will daven with kavanah on this Rosh Hashanah, ובכך יתקדש שמוך ה' אלקינו על, etc., that Hashem's name be sanctified, and the beis medresh should be built for His honor."

The next day, Tzom Gedalyah, Reb Chaim Shaul Eizenstat walked with his son, Reb Shmuel, from his home on Rechov Fishel, Yerushalayim, to the nearby beis medresh Har Tzvi for Minchah. The main minyan in Har Tzvi was in the middle of kriyas HaTorah. Reb Chaim Shaul said to his son, "I want to daven from the beginning to the end; not catch a minyan that's in the middle." So they went to another room in the Har Tzvi building, and they found a minyan in the middle of the silent Shemonah Esrei. In a third room, the minyan was up to chazaras hashatz. Reb Chaim Shaul said, "Let's wait here a few minutes. They will finish soon, and another minyan will start."

His son suggested, "Let's try the Lelov beis medresh next door. They probably didn't start yet."

They went there, but they were also in the middle of kriyas haTorah.

So, they left Lelov, to return to Har Tzvi.

As they were walking to Har Tzvi, they met an old couple, simple people. They were saying, "Beit Knesset!

Kedushah and Bitachon

The root of the word בטחון is the three letters ט"ת ח"ת. The Bas Ayin (Bamidbar) notes that all three letters have the letters ת"ת

in them when they are spelled out in full. The gematriya of ת"ת is (410) קדו"ש. The gematriya of ח"ת is (410) קדו"ש. It tells us that with bitachon, one can achieve kedushah.

Beit Knesset!" Reb Chaim Shaul thought they were asking where they could find a beis knesses to daven, so he pointed in the direction of Har Tzvi. But then the couple said, "Kesef! Money! Beis Knesset!"

Reb Chaim Shaul thought they wanted to go to the beis knesses to collect money for tzedakah, so Reb Chaim Shaul took out some money from his pocket and gave it to them.

Then they explained in their broken Hebrew that they wanted to donate a beis knesses, and they were searching for people who needed a Beit Knesset.

Reb Chaim Shaul told them, "You came to the right person."

After Minchah, they spoke for a long time. The elderly couple told him that they don't have children, r'l. The husband works as a street paver and his wife is a tailor. They saved up their money to build a beis knesses so that their memory would live on. As it states (56:5) וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם בְּבֵיתִי וּבְחוֹמֹתַי יָד וְשֵׁם טוֹב מִבָּנִים וּמִבָּנוֹת שֵׁם עוֹלָם "I will give them in My house and in My walls a place and a name, better than sons and daughters; an everlasting name I will give him, which will not be discontinued." They wanted the beis medresh built before they leave this world. They had saved up a substantial amount of money and were ready to go forward.

That morning, they decided they would go out to search for people who needed a beis knesses, but they didn't find anyone. They live near the Shaarei Tzedek hospital and had walked all the way from there to Rechov Tzefanyah (where Har Tzvi is located) – quite a distance – all the while looking for someone in need of a beis knesses.

Reb Chaim Shaul told them that his brother-in-law, Reb Weisfish, has a Kollel and a kiruv organization, and they desperately needed a new beis knesses. The elderly couple had previously heard of Reb Weisfish and of his organization because someone from their family did teshuvah due to them and agreed to pay for the entire beis knesses! They immediately went to a lawyer to finalize the details.

In the end, they also donated a sefer Torah.

This is a story of wondrous hashgachah pratis. Hakadosh Baruch Hu had them walk the long distance from their home to Rechov Tzefanyah, where they met the right person looking to raise money for a beis knesses. However, there are several additional lessons from this story:

- 1) A person must make hishtadlus, but his salvation can come from a completely different avenue. Reb Chaim Shaul traveled around the world to raise money for the beis medresh. He did his hishtadlus, and the salvation came from a couple he met in Yerushalayim.
- 2) We also learn from this story the great importance of tefillah b'tzibur. Had Reb Chaim Shaul not been so scrupulous about minyan, he would have davened in the first minyan he found in Har Tzvi, or he would have stayed in Lelov. He had searched for a minyan for so long, so maybe it was time to give up and accept the second best. But he didn't do so. He insisted on davening properly. Because he had mesirus nefesh to daven properly, he merited that Hashem sent him the people who could help.
- 3) Another angle to consider is the See also the power of tefillah. This story occurred on Tzom Gedalyah, a day after Reb Yisrael Yaakov Weisfish zt'l poured out his heart in tefillah to be zocheh to build a beis medresh for Hashem's honor.
- 4) We also learn from this story that a person can't manage without tefillah, even to perform good deeds. This couple saved up money for years, wanting to build a beis knesses, but they needed tefillah. The moment Reb Weisfish davened, Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought the donors to the right place.

The Bas Ayin also teaches that בטחון comes from the word כֹּסֶה, which means cover.⁴ This is because the cover that protects kedushah is bitachon. The explanation is as follows:

Many forms of livelihood involve tests in kedushah. With bitachon, one knows that he can guard his eyes and even sometimes give up financial opportunities when necessary. This is because he believes that Hashem supports him.⁵

The Shach (Reb Shabsi Kohen) is one of the primary poskim in Shulchan Aruch (Yorah Deah and Choshen Mishpat). The Shach was approached by his father-in-law, who told him, "I can no longer support you. I want you to try your hand at business."

So, when the market came to their city, the Shach engaged in some business activity and was highly successful.

A few weeks or months later, the market returned to their city. His father-in-law said, "You did so well last time; I'm certain you will succeed again this time."

"I will not do business this time," the Shach replied.

"But why not? You can be wealthy. You have a good mind for business."

The Shach explained that his initial success emanated from the yetzer hara, to lure him away from studying Torah. "The yetzer hara wants me to spend a lot of time doing business. And then, after he stole all those hours from me, he will take the money

4. The root of the word בטחון is טח, which means to cover. Kidneys are called בטוחות (see Tehillim 51:8, הן אמת חפצת, בכליות הטוחות ומכוסות בחלב, the kidneys are covered and concealed under the fats.

5. A person was standing on a pier, casting out his fishing rod, when someone came by to watch him. He noticed that instead of putting bait on the hook, this person attached a clock. "Why are you casting a clock into the water?" the observer asked in wonder. "Why don't you put bait on the hook?"

"It is a great secret," the fisherman responded. "I learned it in fishing school."

"What's the secret? Please tell me."

"No. I paid a lot to learn this secret and will not give it away for free."

The man watching replied, "I am willing to pay to learn the secret."

The fisherman said, "For one thousand dollars, I will tell you, and believe me, that is a low price compared to what I paid to learn this secret."

The man paid a thousand dollars, and the fisherman divulged the secret: "Fish always keep their eyes open, and biologists (ichthyologists) discovered the reason: There is no clock in the water, making the fish wonder what time it is. That is why they swim about, with their eyes opened, looking for a clock."

"Amazing," said the new student. "So, when you put a clock into the water, all the fish come to see the time, and you can catch them."

"Exactly," said the fisherman, putting the thousand dollars he just received into his pocket.

"Tell me," said the student, "how many fish did you catch today?"

"Today, I caught eight fish... You are the eighth one."

The nimshal is that when you access the internet to earn money, you think you gained money. Actually, it isn't money that was caught. It is you who was caught. It is the yetzer hara's clever scheme to draw you into its trap.

away as well. I will be left without money and without Torah."

The Shach said that this is hinted at in the words (Shemos 15:9) *אמר אויב ארדוף אשיג אחלק שלל*. The pasuk can be read like this: *אמר אויב*, the enemy is the yetzer hara. He says, *ארדוף אשיג*, I will catch the Yid in my net. How will he do so? First, *אחלק שלל*, the yetzer hara will give him a lot of money and make him feel like a successful businessman. And then, *אריק חרבי תורשמו ידי*, the yetzer hara will take out his sword and make him poor. He only made him wealthy to pull him away from Torah study. After he succeeds, he will take away the money, too.

But with bitachon, one doesn't fall prey to tests. He knows that designating firm times for studying Torah and being cautious with his kedushah won't detract him from his parnassah.⁶

Hashem's Plan Will Always Transpire

We say in the Haggadah shel Pesach (Devarim 26:5) *וירד מצרימה ויגר שם*, "He went down to Mitzrayim and he sojourned there." The Haggadah explains, *מלמד שלא ירד יעקב* – "This means that Yaakov didn't want to live in Mitzrayim for a long time, only for a short time. שנאמר, *לגור בארץ באנו כי אין מרעה לצאן אשר לעבדיך כי כבוד הרעב בארץ*, "They said to Pharaoh, 'We have come to live for a short time, in the land, for your servants' flocks have no pasture, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan' (Bereishis 47:4)."

ויגר שם means that the Yidden's original intention in Mitzrayim was to live there for a short time.

The question is, after the famine, why did they not return to Eretz Yisrael as they had originally planned to?

As long as Yaakov Avinu was alive, we can answer that since Yaakov was old, his children didn't want him to go through the trouble of traveling so far. (Additionally, Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Yaakov to go to Mitzrayim. Perhaps he didn't have permission to leave Mitzrayim.) But after Yaakov was niftar, why didn't they return to Eretz Yisrael? All his children brought their father to be buried in Maaras HaMachpeilah; they could have stayed there! Did they forget that they had only come *לגור בארץ*, to live for a short time in Mitzrayim? When the hunger was over, they should have returned.

The answer, it seems, is that they forgot. It was destined from heaven that their minds should not think straight regarding this matter. They forgot that they planned to return to Eretz Yisrael. This was destined from heaven because it was Hashem's plan that they should be slaves in Mitzrayim. Hashem caused them to overlook what they had initially planned.

Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Dezh zy"a (בעגלי צדק) gives this explanation, and with it he answers another popular question on the first Rashi of this week's parashah.

Rashi (47:28), at the beginning of the parashah, asks, "Why is this parashah *סתומה* (without a space)?" Generally, there is a space in

6. A yungerman travels from Eretz Yisrael to Europe every two weeks to deliver a shiur in a yeshiva. He generally flies on planes that don't have video sets. When the only flights available are with screens, he prefers a daytime flight because then he can immerse himself in Torah study and not see anything happening around him.

Once, he had to take a night flight on a plane, and there were video sets on the plane. He was distraught, but what could he do? He had to take this flight. So, he took along sleeping pills, and as he davened minchah in the airport, he asked Hashem to help him protect his eyes.

Then a miracle occurred. He sat between two goyim, and neither of their screens worked. They called over the steward, but he couldn't fix their sets either. His tefillos were answered. He was able to travel without sacrificing his kedushah.

the Torah separating the parshiyos. Between Bereishis and Noach, there is a space. There is a space between Noach and Lech Lecha, and so on. But there is no space between Vayigash and Vayechi. Why is that?

Rashi answers, "After Yaakov Avinu was niftar, the hearts and the eyes of the Jewish nation became 'closed' due to the misery of slavery." The parashah is "closed" (סתומה) because the hearts and the eyes of the Jewish nation were "closed" at that time due to the tzaros.

The problem is that the tzaros hadn't begun yet! Chazal (Seder Olam Rabba 3, quoted in Rashi Shemos 6:15) state that as long as one of Yaakov Avinu's children were alive, the slavery didn't begin. When Yaakov was niftar, the difficult labor hadn't started, so why were the Jewish nation's hearts and eyes closed?

Reb Mendel of Dezh says that we can explain Rashi as follows: שָׁרְיוֹן שְׁנֵפֶטֶר יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ, Yaakov was niftar, now nothing was holding them back from returning to Eretz Yisrael, so why didn't they? The answer must be that וְנִסְתָּמוּ עֵינֵיהֶם וְלִבָּם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל, that Hashem caused them to forget. Why did Hashem cause them to forget? מִצָּרַת הַשְּׁעָבוּד, because Hashem wanted to bring on the slavery in Mitzrayim.⁷ According to this explanation, "their hearts were closed" indicates they forgot their original plan.

Let us learn from this that Hakadosh Baruch Hu leads the world and brings forth His plan as He wants things to be. Hashem

does everything, and even the mistakes people make are also from Hashem. One mustn't say that if I had done something differently, things would have been better. It is the opposite. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to bring about His decree, which is why He caused you to make this mistake.

Reb Moshe Sternbuch Shlita heard the following story from those who were close to the Satmar Rebbe zt'l. A group of wealthy individuals told the Satmar Rebbe that they wanted to publish a newspaper written solely in accordance with the Rebbe's daas Torah. They said, "There will be a great benefit because it will publicize the Rebbe's *hashkafah* and *shittah*."

The Satmar Rebbe said that he needs some time to think it over. A couple of days later he told them that he doesn't agree with the idea of putting out a newspaper. He explained that newspapers tend to explain what occurs in the world, and they explain everything according to the rules of nature. They write that this happened because of this, and that occurred because of what ploni did or didn't do, and so on. They forget that everything occurs because it was Hashem's will. We must remember that everything happens from Hashem. I can't take on the responsibility of putting out a newspaper and risking the pure emunah of our fellow Yidden."

Everyone must believe that everything is from Hashem. His hashgachah pratis is over every detail, and His plan will always transpire.⁸

7. Reb Tzvi Meizlish zt'l (Kuntres Zer Zahav אור קל in his sefer Mikadshei Hashem) writes, "We witnessed a wondrous phenomenon during the terrible destruction [of the Holocaust]. Most of our brothers of Bnei Yisrael didn't do anything to save themselves from the Nazi murders, ym's. They allowed themselves to believe their lies, that they were being sent to work, and that they wouldn't harm anyone. When we arrived in Auschwitz, and we saw the churban, we stood there shocked. But behold, the heart knew the truth. How did we allow ourselves to go blindly, like sheep to the slaughter? I used to give people chizuk, that these tzaros are the birth pains [before the coming of Moshiach], and therefore, Hashem, with His hashgachah, didn't allow us to see the obvious with our eyes or feel anything in our hearts."

8. A recent story occurred with a person who owns a soda vending machine. He placed it in a busy location and has parnassah from it. This person studies Torah three hours every day in the afternoon. During these

hours, he keeps his cell phone turned off.

Once, after he finished learning, he left the beis medresh and turned on his phone to see whether he missed any calls. He had seventeen voicemails, far more than usual, and he wondered what had occurred. He called the voice mailbox. The first message was a friend calling. In a shocked voice, the friend told him that thieves broke into his machine and stole everything in it – the soda cans and all of the money. The friend told him to come to the site of the crime as quickly as possible to see what could be done.

In the second voicemail, he said, "My friend, every moment is precious. Maybe call the police."

The third voicemail said, "The police have already arrived, and it seems that they caught the thief. Go quickly to the police station (in the Russian compound, מִגְרַשׁ הָרוּסִים, in Yerushalayim) so you can press charges on the thief. Otherwise, they won't process the theft."

By the fourth voicemail mail, the friend said that since he wasn't answering the phone, he appointed himself to be in his place. He was in the police office and placing charges on the thief.

In the fifth voicemail, he said that he succeeded in returning the theft up to the last penny. Nothing was missing.

The sixth voicemail said that the soda machine was working again and was properly secured.

(There were other messages, but unrelated to this episode.)

He rushed to the site to see with his own eyes that everything was functioning regularly, like before.

Now, let us think what would have happened had this man kept his phone on during his designation learning session. When receiving the first call, he would have rushed to the machine to see what happened and what he could do. Then he would go with the police to the police station. He would endure hours of distress and worry. He had a much calmer day with his phone closed. It could be that Hashem protected him in the merit of his dedication to the Torah. As Chazal (Avos 3:6) say, "Whoever accepts on himself the yoke of Torah, it is removed from him the yoke of malchus and derech eretz."

Here is another story. I heard it from the baal hamaaseh:

"Some years ago, I traveled from my home in Bnei Brak to be with my parents in Monsey for Pesach. I stayed near the Satmar beis medresh on the corner of Monsey Blvd. and Maple Ave. The day after Pesach, on Isru Chag, when it was time to return home to Eretz Yisrael, I saw that I had an hour before I had to leave Monsey. I debated whether to go to the grave of the Admor of Ribnitz zy'a or go back to my father's home, to perform the mitzvah of kibud av one more time. I decided to go to my father. I thought I would be there for ten minutes, but my father asked me to help him with some matters – to organize things, to climb up to the attic... What can I say? Due to my many aveiros, I thought my father was asking me to do things for no purpose. Nevertheless, I did everything he requested and performed his wishes with a happy attitude. I finished, received his brachah for my trip, and left his house.

Upon leaving the house, I looked at the clock and saw that I still had fifteen minutes to spare. So, I went down Maple Ave. to Hatzlachah Grocery. I had been looking in several stores for a particular food item that I needed for my children. Until then, I couldn't find it since it is chametz, and the stores weren't carrying it yet. As I entered Hatzlachah grocery, I heard an announcement on the microphone system, 'Is someone here called...' and they said my family name, although my family name isn't so common. I went to the office and was shocked to find my young son there. He wasn't even six years old at the time. After inquiring and trying to understand what happened, I understood that the boy left the house where we were staying and wandered on the streets of a city he didn't know. He walked down the entire Maple Ave., passed Hatzlachah grocery and came to an area where only goyim lived. Miraculously, there was a Yid there, and he asked him what he was looking for. He said that his father went shopping. (I don't know why he thought I went shopping, but it was from heaven that he said that.) The man brought my son to Hatzlachah grocery, the nearest store, thinking that I might still be there. Just when my name was announced, I entered the store.

When I calmed down a bit, I made a cheshbon hanefesh and realized that if I hadn't gone to my father's house, I surely wouldn't have been at Hatzlachah grocery. It is only because I went to my father's home,

Don't Embarrass Your Fellow Man

Chazal (Bava Metzia 58:, 59.) say, "Whoever turns his fellow man's face to white [from embarrassment] it is like murder... and he doesn't have a portion in the world to come."

The Gemara also says that if someone shames his fellow man, he won't leave Gehinom, r'l.

In the days of the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz zt'l, one of the fundraisers of the yeshiva hadn't raised enough money and the *magidei shiurim* – didn't receive their full paycheck. Slowly, the deficit was growing. Some members behind the yeshiva came to the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz and told him what was going on. The Imrei Chaim said to one of those men, "Go tell this fundraiser that things can't go on like this, and he should quit his job."

The next day, the rebbe asked this person whether he had given over the message. The man replied that he hadn't. He explained, "I can't do a *shlichus* of *shefichas damim* (shedding blood)." The Rebbe stood up, hugged him, and said, "I want chasidim like you. People who aren't able to do a *shlichus* of *shefichas damim*."

Rebbe Yidele of Dzikov zt'l told this story. He added, "Some would think that not obeying what the Rebbe, the Imrei Chaim, said, is chutzpah, but that wasn't how the Imrei Chaim saw it. He was glad the *shaliach* couldn't do a *shlichus*, which would result in harm and distress for another Yid."⁹

It once happened that the gabbai came with a prepared Chanukah menorah for Reb

Aharon of Belz to light. Usually, the Belzer Rebbe would light the menorah, but this time he told the gabbai to bring the menorah into his room. A few minutes later, he came out with the menorah and he lit it. No one knew why he first brought the menorah to his room.

Afterwards, the gabbai himself explained what occurred. His role was to prepare the *lecht* with olive oil. This time, by accident, he prepared the menorah with honey liqueur. The Rebbe immediately realized the error, and in order not to embarrass the gabbai, he asked that they bring the menorah into his room. When the error was corrected, he brought out the menorah to light it.

My grandfather, Reb Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zt'l was once davening at the Kosel HaMaaravi. A man there wanted to give a sefer to the Rebbe, hoping that the Rebbe would give him some money for it. But before he could get to the Rebbe, the gabbaim prevented him from coming near. They didn't want him disturbing during the Rebbe's tefillos and avodas hakodesh. When the Rebbe finished davening and was about to leave the Kosel Plaza, he saw this Yid from a distance, trying to sell the sefarim in his arms. The Rebbe trembled in fear because he understood that this person wanted to approach him, but the gabbaim didn't allow him to do so. The Rebbe placed his hand over his forehead and said from the depths of his heart, "How can one cause distress for a Yid?" Regarding the gabbaim, he said, "They totally confuse me."

which is near Hatzlachah, that I went to that grocery. If my son would be lost among the goyim, who knows how long it would have taken until I found him? How would we find him? Certainly, only after hours of distress. But in the merit of kibud av, that my father held me up at his house for forty-five minutes, I came to the store just at the right time, when they announced my name."

9. The Imrei Emes of Gur zt'l said, "When you know someone going through a hard time, and you aren't able to help him, and you don't know the words that will console him, you should at least listen to him, and allow him to pour out his bitter heart before you because that is therapeutic. It is helpful for a person to feel that someone understands what he is going through. A hint to this idea is in parashas Vayeishev (37:21) וישמע ראובן ויצילהו מידם, "Reuven heard and saved him." To listen is also a way to save someone.

He told his gabbaim to call over this Yid quickly, so he could appease him and give him a donation. After that, he washed his hands and returned to the Kosel to daven some more.

This year, on Shabbos parashas Toldos, a chazzan davened in a beis medresh, using a tune that was not standard for that community. After the tefillah, someone rebuked him. The chazan was embarrassed; his face turned deep red, and got was ready to answer back. Someone quickly approached the chazzan and pleaded for him not to answer back. He explained that his brother was twenty-eight years old and needed a shidduch badly. "Daven for him, that in the merit that you didn't respond, he should find his zivug."

The chazan did so. On Wednesday, parashas Vayishlach, that twenty-eight-year-old bachur became a chasan.

This is because when one is silent and doesn't answer back (called *הנעלבין ואינם מעליבין*), he is precious in Hashem's eyes. As the Gemara (Taanis 25:) teaches:

There was a time when there was no rain. Reb Eliezer approached the amud and said 24 brachos to request rain, but his tefillos weren't answered. Then Reb Akiva stood up to daven. He went to the amud and said a few lines (*אבינו מלכנו אין לנו מלך אלא אתה אבינו מלכנו למענך רחם עלינו*), and it began to rain. The students in the beis medresh began murmuring that Reb Akiva must be greater than Reb Eliezer because his tefillos were answered so quickly. A bas kol came forth and said, "It isn't because Reb Akiva is greater. It is because Reb Akiva has an exceptional quality that Reb Eliezer doesn't. Reb Akiva was *מעביר על מדותיו*; he went beyond the letter of the law to forgive others and to be at peace with others. Therefore, his tefillos were answered, while the tefillos of Reb Eliezer weren't answered.

Shovavim

When Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe in the bush, Moshe didn't want to

look at Hashem. Later, Moshe requested, (Shemos 33:18) *הֲרָאִי נָא אֶת כְּבוֹדְךָ*, "Show me now your glory." The Gemara (Brachos 7.) says that Hashem replied, "When I wanted, you didn't want. Now that you want, I don't want."

Reb Tzvi Meir Zilberberg Shlita says that we can learn from this the importance of taking advantage of an *eis ratzon*. When there is a special time that Hashem shines His face onto us, we should grab the opportunity. Otherwise, Hashem might say, "When I wanted, you didn't want, and now that you want, I don't want."

On this Motzei Shabbos, the six weeks of Shovavim begin. The holy sefarim say that saying Tehillim and learning Torah with hasmadah during these weeks purifies us immensely from severe aveiros. When we have the opportunity, we should grasp it. Otherwise, Hashem might say, "When I gave you the opportunity, you didn't want it, and now I don't want to."

Reb Tzvi Meir tells a story that happened with the Shinover Rav zt'l. An elderly person was waiting in line to speak with the Shinover Rav. The person before him was a yungerman who didn't yet have children. The line began outside the Shinover Rav's room and continued into his room. The elderly man was already in the Rav's room, waiting in line when the yungerman in front of him was speaking with the Shinover Rav. This elderly man overheard the yungerman tell the Shinover Rav that he was many years after his chasunah and still doesn't have children. The Shinover Rav went into a state of *deveikus*; it appeared like he was sleeping. The yungerman was tired from the trip and went off to the side, sat down, closed his eyes, and fell asleep.

The Shinover Rav awoke, opened his eyes, and said, "This year, you will have a boy. Mazal tov." The yungerman who had presented this request no longer stood before the Shinover Rav. He had moved to the side of the room to close his eyes and to rest. The second person in line, the elderly Yid,

received the brachah to bear a child! Indeed, a year later, he had a son.

The person lying on the side of the room awoke just then. He rushed over to the Shinover Rav and explained that he was the one who gave the kvitel with the request for children, and he should receive the brachah for children. The Shinover Rav answered that the bracha was already given to someone else, and he couldn't help him now.

(Reb Meir Tzvi heard this story from an elderly Yid, who heard it from the elderly Yid of the story who received the brachah from the Shinover Rav for children.)

The lesson from this story is that when it is a special time, don't squander the opportunity with sleep.

Rebbe Moshe Lelover

Before Reb Moshe of Lelov *zt'l* (*niftar* 13th of Teves, 5611) got engaged, his father, Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zt'l*, and his future father-in-law, the Yid HaKodesh of Peshischa *zt'l*, discussed the conditions for the marriage. They agreed on all points except the type of kiddushin ring to use. Rebbe Dovid of Lelov wanted the *kiddushin* ring to be silver, and the Yid HaKadosh insisted that the ring be gold. They never really resolved this matter, but since they agreed on all the other points, the *shidduch* was finalized.

At the chuppah, the Yid Hakadosh saw the *chasan* holding a silver ring. He proclaimed, "Without a gold ring, there won't be a *chasunah*." A commotion arose. The wedding guests stood by, waiting for a resolution.

A simple person in the crowd realized this was his opportunity to do a great mitzvah. He asked his wife if she was willing to part with her gold ring. She agreed. They

sold it to the *chasan*, and the *chuppah* commenced.

The couple who sold the gold ring was childless for many years. That year, they had a son. Chassidim say that Rebbe Dovid of Lelov and the Yid HaKodesh deliberately debated over the ring to grant this couple the opportunity to do a great mitzvah and thereby merit a salvation.

Toward the end of his life, Rebbe Moshe moved to Eretz Yisrael because he saw, with his ruach hakodesh, that if he would daven at the Kosel HaMaaravi, he could bring Moshiach.

Before he undertook the journey, he went to *gezeigen* (take leave) from several of the great tzaddikim of the time. When he came to Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a*, the Ruzhiner said, "Wait for me, and I will go with you."

Rebbe Moshe Lelover pointed to his white beard, implying that he was getting older and couldn't wait any longer.¹⁰

Rebbe Moshe planned to travel to Eretz Yisrael with a minyan of his followers, and he saved up money to pay for the voyage. But whenever he had saved up enough money, he gave it away for some important tzedakah. Then, he would start saving up once again.

Once, a wealthy, childless woman came to Rebbe Moshe of Lelov and asked for a *brachah* for children. Rebbe Moshe told her she would have a child if she gave him a large sum of money (the amount needed for the trip). She agreed to provide the funds, but Rebbe Moshe Lelover told her that she must first ask permission from her husband.

Her husband was a chassid of "The Gitte Yid" of Neustadt, and he asked the Gitte Yid whether he should give the money. His Rebbe replied, "If Rebbe Moshe guarantees

10. The Rebbe of Ruzhin said that if the Yidden in Poland were wise, they wouldn't allow Rebbe Moshe of Lelov to leave them. He found this hinted at in the Mishnah in Shabbos, אין פולין לאור הנה, "The Polish Yidden aren't wise; they had one brilliant light, and they let it go."

a child, you can rely on that. However, before you give the money, ask Rebbe Moshe Lelover to guarantee that the child will live long because often, a child born through a miracle doesn't live long."

When the parents placed that condition before Rebbe Moshe of Lelov, he replied, "The years of your child's life will be as many as the days I live in Eretz Yisrael."

Rebbe Moshe Lelover lived in Eretz Yisrael for 74 days, and that child lived to the age of 74.

When Rebbe Moshe Lelover was on the boat, he kept saying *יום לשנה יום לשנה*, "A day for a year," and it is explained that he intended that he would be *zocheh* to live in Eretz Yisrael for 74 days, and he was 74 years old.

During the voyage to Eretz Yisrael, the ship sprung a hole and started taking on water. Rebbe Moshe placed a cloth over the hole, miraculously stopping the strong surge of water. (This cloth is now used as a *deck tichel* [veil] for the *kallahs* of Rebbe Moshe's descendants.)

During the trip, the ship docked at a deserted island. Everyone got off the boat, including Rebbe Moshe Lelover and his *gabai*. Eventually, the sailors blew their horns to call everyone back aboard. Everyone returned besides for the Rebbe's *gabai*. The ship departed, and his *gabai* was left behind! The following Friday night, before saying

Kiddush, Rebbe Moshe announced, "I will not make Kiddush until the *gabai* arrives." Immediately, they heard a loud thud, and the *gabai* appeared.

The *gabai* told them, "I was captured by the *other side* (*sheidim*/demons). I heard them say, 'The old tzaddik is saying that he won't make Kiddush until his *gabai* returns, but he can't do anything. The *gabai* is with us.' But their leader announced, 'This isn't a joke. If the old tzaddik said that he isn't making Kiddush until the *gabai* comes, we must obey,' and they returned me here."¹¹

The ship docked in northern Eretz Yisrael. Rebbe Moshe Lelover visited the holy tzaddikim of Tzefas and Teveria and went to Miron and other places where holy tzaddikim are buried. He explained that after he gets to Yerushalayim, he will never leave her.

When he finally arrived in the Old City of Yerushalayim, he became ill. His children debated whether they should bring him to the Kosel HaMaaravi in his frail condition. Finally, they decided to take him since his main goal for coming to Eretz Yisrael was to get to the Kosel and bring Moshiach.

On the way to the Kosel, a group of Arabs began throwing rocks at them, making it impossible to get there. Shortly afterward, he was *niftar*. Unfortunately, he never did get to the Kosel....

11. This remarkable story has a sequel: Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zy'a (a descendent of Rebbe Moshe Lelover) lived in Germany before World War II. It was dangerous for a Yid to be seen outdoors during those times. Nevertheless, on Friday afternoon, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai left his house to go to the mikvah because Rebbe Dovid of Lelov taught that a Yid must have *mesirus nefesh* for mikvah. He passed a group of Germans. They grabbed him and began beating him. Just then, a chassid, Reb Avraham Frankel z'l, passed by. Reb Avraham Frankel was a strong man, and without much trouble, he rescued Reb Moshe Mordechai from their hands. Soon, the police arrived and arrested Reb Avraham Frankel!

Later that night, before making Kiddush, Reb Moshe Mordechai repeated the story that happened to his grandfather, Rebbe Moshe of Lelov. When Reb Moshe Mordechai completed the story, Reb Avraham Frankel walked in. (When one talks about a past miracle, this can cause the miracle to repeat itself.)

Rebbe Avraham Frankel said that in the police headquarters, an interrogator asked him why he was arrested. Reb Avraham replied that he didn't commit any crime. He only protected someone who was harassed and beaten by a gang. The interrogator believed him and set him free. It was miraculous!

Before his passing, he said the day of his *yahrtzeit* would be *mesugal* for rain, and it is unnecessary to proclaim a fast day for rain before his *yahrtzeit* passes. Reb Shmuel Salant *zt'l*, the Rav of Yerushalayim, kept this counsel. He wouldn't decree a fast day for rain until the 13th of Teves passed.

Rebbe Moshe also said that whoever does something in honor of his *yahrtzeit* (primarily, giving food to Yidden, such as cake and *lechayim* in *beis medresh*) will merit salvation with whatever he needs.¹²

Zechuso Yagein Aleinu!

12. The Gemara (Taanis 25.) says, דגמירי דמיהב יהבי מישקל לא שקלי, "We have a tradition that [Heaven] gives, but doesn't take away."

When someone told Rebbe Moshe Lelover that sometimes he earns *parnassah* but then loses it, he advised him to learn Gemara because דגמירי, when one studies גמרא, then דמיהב יהבי מישקל לא שקלי, heaven gives him *parnassah* and doesn't take it away.