

לעילו נשמת: אריה ישראל בן מרדכי ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

# Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita

Terumah

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



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## Torah Wellsprings - Terumah

### Throw Your Trust on Hashem

Rashi (25:31) writes, "Moshe didn't understand what the menorah should look like, so Hashem told him, השלך הכבר לאור והיא נעשית מעליה, throw the *kikar* (measurement) of gold into the fire and it will become a menorah on its own." And that's what happened. Moshe threw the *kikar* of gold into the fire, and a menorah came out.

כבר often means a loaf of bread. Therefore, the Divrei Yisrael zt'l explains Rashi as follows: השלך הכבר לאור והיא נעשית מעליה, "Throw your worries of *parnassah* onto Hashem, and let Him take care of your *parnassah*. It will happen on its own."

Many times one doesn't know how he will earn *parnassah*. The Torah advises him, השלך הכבר לאור,

throw your *parnassah* onto Hashem, trust in Him, and He will support you.

Reb Shalom Shwadron zt'l once saw Reb Yechezkel Levinstein zt'l in a state of immense joy, and he asked him about it. Reb Yechezkel said, "When I was the *mashgiach* of yeshivas Mir (in Europe) the paycheck didn't always come on time. The situation forced me to place my trust in Hashem. When I came to Eretz Yisrael, and Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman offered me to be the *mashgiach* of the Ponevizh yeshiva, I naively thought the Ponevizher Rav has a lot of money, and I would always have enough money. I wasn't worried about my *parnassah*, but I was worried about my *bitachon*. In Mir, my financial situation was a constant reminder that I must trust in Hashem, but

how would I remember to practice *bitachon* when I'm earning a comfortable living?

"But, I've been in the yeshiva for eight months now, and the money isn't coming on time. Once again, I must trust in Hashem. And that's why I'm so joyous."

Lavan told Yaakov (*Bereishis* 30:28), נקבה שכרך עלי, ואתנה, "State your wages and I will pay." The *Radak* (30:31) explains, Lavan wanted to pay Yaakov like a paid worker, with a fixed wage, but Yaakov didn't agree. If he had a set wage, he wouldn't feel obligated to turn his eyes to Hashem for his *parnassah*. He

preferred that his wages should be that all the sheep born עקודים מלאים ברורים, with spots, stripes, and blotches should be his. With this arrangement, he knew he would feel totally dependent on Hashem's mercy. Because if all sheep will be born white, he won't get any payment. He preferred this risk over a pre-arranged salary so he will continuously turn his eyes to Hashem.<sup>1</sup>

*Tehillim* (107) lists the four people who were saved from a danger and must praise Hashem. The *Malbim* notes that the *pesukim* divides them into two categories:

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1. The *Radak* writes, לא תתן לי שום דבר קצוב בשכרי, אלא יהיה שכרי דרך מקרה וטובה, "לא תתן לי שום דבר קצוב בשכרי, אלא יהיה שכרי דרך מקרה וטובה, [Yaakov said] 'Don't pay me a set wage. My payment should come by chance, by Hashem's kindness, as Hashem arranges it for me.'"

Reb Gad'l Eisner *zt'l* said, "The employee and his boss both trust in "one" the difference between them is which "one" they trust in. The employee trusts on the 1st of the month, because that's when he gets his paycheck, while the boss trusts in the "one" Hashem to grant them *parnassah*."

Those who crossed a desert or a sea are in one category. Their lives were in danger. They were lost in the desert and didn't know the way out, or they were in a storm at sea and the ship almost capsized. But Hashem saved them, and therefore they must praise Hashem.

The second category are the ill who become healed and those who were freed from jail.

The Malbim teaches: About the first category (those who crossed a desert or a sea) the *pasuk* calls their prayers *ויצעקו* (a very intense form of prayer), and their salvation is called *יציילם* (a complete salvation). Whereas, the second category (the ill who were healed and those freed from jail) their *tefillos* are called *ויזעקו*, and their salvation is called *וישיעם*. (This means their shouts aren't as sincere, and the salvation isn't as perfect.)

The Malbim explains: Those who traversed a sea

or a desert knew that no one can help them other than Hashem. They were wandering in the desert, not knowing the way out, or they were being tossed around in a storm in a ship at sea. Who could help them, other than Hashem?

Their totally devoted prayers are called *ויצעקו*, and since their devotion in prayer was complete, their salvation was also complete, as implied by *יציילם*. In contrast, those who were ill or imprisoned rely, to a degree, on their doctors or on their lawyers to save them. They don't recognize that they are totally dependent on Hashem. Such a prayer is called *ויזעקו*. They call to Hashem, but they think their salvation can come from other sources. Their *tefillos* are incomplete, and therefore their salvation is also less perfect, as implied by *וישיעם*.

Someone once told his rebbe and mentor, "I fear

that I'm detached from Hashem, because Hashem hasn't given me *parnassah*."

His rebbe replied, "You feel detached?! There is no one more attached than you, for due to your circumstances you place your trust solely in Him."

A *mashal* is told about a person who fell deeply into debt. His friends told him, "In such-and-such city there lives a wealthy person. If you can meet with him, he will pull you out of debt." But they warned him that it is very hard to get a meeting with him.

He asked many people for advice, how he can have a meeting with him, but they all answered that they also don't know. Some said that they tried to get a meeting with him and failed.

He decided he would travel to that country and try his best to get an appointment.

After his first *shacharis* in the local beis medresh of the city where that philanthropist lives, he spoke with the person who davened next to him, and asked him advice how he can meet with this philanthropist.

The man replied, "I know him quite well. I know his *seder hayom*... I am with him every day..." As they spoke, it dawned on him that the person he was speaking to was that wealthy philanthropist, himself. He no longer needed people's help to secure a meeting with this wealthy person; he was speaking to him, face to face!

The *nimshal* is, when one has a problem, his mind searches for solutions. Even while saying *Shemonah Esrei* his mind is jumping from idea to idea, searching for a solution. We tell him, "Now, when you are davening *Shemonah Esrei*, don't let your mind

wander. Right now, you are speaking directly with the One who can help you! Keep your focus solely on Him, and you will receive your salvation."

### Humility

The main lamp of the menorah was its middle one. As it states (25:37), ועשית את נרותיה על שבעה והעלה את נרותיה על עבר פניה, "Make seven lamps, and light them towards the middle one." The middle lamp was also the smallest branch (the other six had to bend out before reaching the full height of the menorah). The Imrei Emes *zt'l* said that this hints to the attribute of humility. The one who considers himself the smallest is really the greatest.

The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* found a hint to humility from the *keruvim*. The faces of the *keruvim* were those of children. This tells us to consider ourselves small, no matter what level we reach.

About the *aron* it states (25:10), ועשו ארון עצי שמים אמתים, וחצי ארכו ואמה וחצי וחצי רחבו ואמה וחצי קמתו, "Make the *aron* from *shittim* wood. Two and half *amos* long, an *amah* and a half wide and an *amah* and a half high."

The Kli Yakar writes, "All the *amos* of the *aron* were שבורות (half, and not full *amos*) because everyone should think he hasn't reached perfection in wisdom."

Similarly, the Baal HaTurim writes, "All of its measurements were in half *amos*, to teach us that whoever studies Torah must humble himself."

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* said that אדר is *roshei teivos* for אלוף דר רש, "Hashem dwells with the humble."

Among the traits of the humble is that they are שומעים הרפתם ואינם משיבים, they can hear people disgracing them, and they don't answer back. They aren't passionate about guarding

their honor and pride, and therefore they prefer to be silent, to avoid *machlokes*.

This attitude is *mesugal* for many *yeshuos* (salvations).

One *gabai* in Lakewood invested a lot of effort to raise money and to build a *beis medresh*. He succeeded to raise the enormous sum and since it was built thanks to his efforts, he felt he had a right to make the rules of the *beis medresh*. He insisted that no one speak during the *tefillah*. Each week before *kriyas haTorah* he stood on the *bimah* and announced, "In this *beis medresh* we don't speak from the beginning of the *tefillah* until the end."

Obviously, those who wanted to speak didn't appreciate this announcement. They mocked him and sarcastically shouted, "*Yashar koach! Yashar koach!*" This happened every week. He suffered from their jeering, but it didn't stop him, because it

was important to him that there shouldn't be speaking during davening.

But one week, the insults that were flung at him after his weekly announcement were far worse than usual. The scoffers shouted, "Who are you to tell us what to do? Just because you have a loud voice doesn't make you in charge. I also have a loud voice..."

He descended the *bimah* in shame, but he didn't answer back. After the *tefillah* he went over to his friend, Reb Aharon Deitsch, and gave him the merit of his humiliation.

Reb Aharon Deitsch was married for seventeen years and they were childless. The *gabai* told him, "I give you the merit of the shame I just endured. May you have children, in the merit of my silence..."

The next two weeks the *gabai* continued his weekly announcements, but his heart wasn't in it anymore.

He was very hurt by the humiliation. Eventually he decided he can't daven there anymore.

But he still kept up with his friends of that beis medresh, especially with Reb Aharon Deutsch.

Once, this *gabbai* said to Reb Aharon Deusch, "The *yahrtzeit* of Rebbe Shayele Kerestirer *zt'l* is approaching (the 3rd of Iyar). Many people say that they received their *yeshuos* there. Come with me to Kerestir and you can daven at the tzaddik's *kever* for children."

He said that it was already eighteen years after his *chasunah*, and he lost hope of ever having children. The *gabbai* urged him to reconsider. "Perhaps this is what you need to merit children?"

Reb Aharon replied, "If you will make peace with the people who embarrassed you in our

beis medresh, I will go with you to Kerestir."

That wasn't an easy request, but since it was very important for the *gabbai* that his friend go to Kerestir, he called the people who humiliated him and he made up with them. They asked his forgiveness, and entreated that he come back to the beis medresh. They promised they wouldn't embarrass him again.

Reb Aharon went with the *gabbai* to Kerestir on the *yahrtzeit*. Less than a year later, Reb Aharon had a daughter.

Reb Aharon Deitsch says, "Chazal say there are three partners in the creation of man: the father, the mother, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But for this child, there are five partners, because it was also in the merit of the *gabbai's* shame, and in the merit of Rebbe Shayele Kerestirer."

In Beitar, two months ago, a firstborn child was born to a couple after thirteen years of waiting.

This is his story:

"A few years ago, I was in Tzefas at a meeting for a communal need. Many respectable people were present, and one of them humiliated me in a very cruel manner in front of everyone. I am not the type of person who keeps quiet at such times. I have a big mouth and I have a lot to say. But before I responded, someone rushed over to me and said, 'Don't answer back. Accept the shame in silence. I have an older brother who needs a *shidduch*. Please give him the merit of your silence.'

"I agreed. Two weeks later, the *bachur* was engaged. I told my wife what happened. She was upset that I didn't take the merit of silence for ourselves. Because we were years after our marriage, and without children. But

she learned the remedy. She anticipated the time when she would be embarrassed, and she will remain quiet and take that merit to have children.

"About a year ago, I was with my wife on a vacation in Tzefas. We were walking on the street minding our own business, but there were some cruel people walking behind us and insulting us in a terrible way. My wife began to cry. I thought it was because of the humiliation. I was ready to answer back, but my wife told me in one word, 'silence' and I understood what she meant. She was crying and praying to Hashem that in the merit of her humiliation we should bear a child. So we walked on, the people behind us continued their chants, and we didn't answer them.

"Exactly nine months later, our first daughter was born."

## Turning Yourself into a Beis HaMikdash

It states (25:8), ועשו לי מקדש, ושכנתי בתוכם, "Make a Mikdash and I will dwell in them." The *meforshim* ask that it should state, ושכנתי בחוכו, "I will dwell in it" because Hashem dwells in the Mishkan.

The Alshich answers ושכנתי בתוכם, "I will dwell in them" hints that because of the Mishkan, Hashem will dwell in every Yid.

This isn't solely something that happened in the past. It states (25:8-9), ועשו לי מקדש... וכן תעשו Mishkan... And so shall you do." What are the words וכן תעשו, "so shall you do" adding?

Rashi explains, וכן תעשו, לדורות, "So shall you do for generations." This means we can build a Mishkan

and Beis HaMikdash even in our generation. How?

The answer is, every person can become a Beis HaMikdash and the Shechinah will rest on him. This happens via studying Torah.

As the Bach (*Orach Chaim* 47 (ד"ה ומ"ש דאמר) writes, "Hashem's plan is that we should study Torah so our *neshamos* will be attached... to the Giver of the Torah... If they will study Torah with this intention... Hashem will rest His *Shechinah* on them... They will become the Mishkan. The *Shechinah* will reside on them."

Torah atones all *aveiros*. The Tzror HaMor writes, "The cover over the *aron* is called *כפרה* because Torah is *כפרה*, לכול תולדתם, atonement for all sins..."

Torah study also purifies one's mind.<sup>2</sup>

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2. The Kotzker *zt'l* said that particularly *seder Kodshim* purifies the mind. However, the Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* says, that for this purity

So, by studying Torah one becomes cleansed from all his sins, he attains a pure mind, he acquires the wisdom of the holy Torah. These factors turn him into an abode for the *Shechinah* to rest.

Even if he is still distant from perfection, he may merit that the *Shechinah* will be with him. A *mashal* is told of a king who was traveling and needed a place to stay overnight. He found a simple inn, not glamorous, but more or less clean and comfortable. The king stayed there. While traveling, and there is nowhere else to go, that was also a fitting abode for the king.

The *nimshal* is, Hashem, the King of the world, resides in the most beautiful places. But when the *Beis*

HaMikdash is destroyed, and Hashem is seeking a place to reside, if a person studies Torah and guards himself from *aveiros*, although he isn't perfect, this may be a sufficient place in *galus* where the *Shechinah* will reside.

Certainly, *tzaddikim* create a proper abode for the king, which is pure, holy, and majestic, and Hashem says, *ושכנתי בתוכם* "I will dwell in them."

So we've seen that Hashem dwells in the *Mishkan* and Hashem also dwells with those who study Torah. Which one of them is a more sacred abode?

It seems it is those who study Torah. Because it states (25:18), *פניהם איש אל אחיו*, "The faces of the *keruvim*

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to happen, one has to study *Kodshim* with a pure mind. So how does one begin? He should strive to have a pure mind, according to his ability and to study *Kodshim*. This study will grant him an even purer mind. The cycle continues until his mind is wholly pure.

faced each other." The Baal HaTurim explains, "They appeared like two friends speaking *divrei Torah* with one another." When you have a replica, an imitation of something, that means the original one is even more special. So, if the *keruvim* represented two people learning together as *chavrusah*, this means the actual *chavrusah* is even greater.

A person can be in a yeshiva, or in his *beis medresh*, learning with his friend, and the holiness is incredible. The highest point of the *Beis HaMikdash* represents it, and doesn't compare to it.

Furthermore, the *pasuk* (*Mishlei* 3:15) states, יקרה היא, מפנינים, "The Torah is more precious than pearls."

The Gemara (*Horiyos* 13.) translate it: "יקרה היא, A Torah scholar is more precious, מפנינים, than the *cohen gadol* who enters לפני ולפנים, the innermost room of the *Beis*

HaMikash (the *kodesh kadoshim*)."

The *Bas Ayin* (בשלה ד"ה) explains, "The *cohen gadol* stood between the poles of the *aron* (בין הכרים) but someone who studies Torah enters the *aron* itself, literally." Figuratively speaking, when one learns he is there, in the *aron*. Therefore, fortunate are those who study Torah. The holiness is immense, the privilege is immeasurable. He is creating an abode for the *Shechinah* to reside there.

Chazal (*Megillah* 10:) say, הארון אינה מן המדה, that the *aron* didn't take up any space. Although the *aron* had its dimensions. As it states (25:10) אמתיים וחצי ארכו ואמה וחצי רחבו, "The length is two and a half *amos*, the width one and a half *amos*..." Nevertheless, in the *kodesh kadoshim* it didn't take up any room at all.

Rashi explains, "The *aron* stood in the middle of the *kodesh kadoshim*. There

were ten *amos* between the *aron* to each of the four walls of the *kodesh kadoshim*. The *kodesh kadoshim* measured 20 x 20 *amos*. This means the *aron* didn't take up any space."

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (תורת משה סוד"ה ועשו ארון, דרשות רל"ז) says that this teaches us that a person should never say that his place isn't conducive for studying Torah. The *aron* didn't take up space, because Torah is above time and space, and everywhere is an ideal place for Torah.

Some *bachurim* claim, "If I were in a better yeshiva, had better *chavrusos* and teachers... I would learn well. But how can I learn here?"

Adults use similar excuses to explain why

they aren't devoting themselves to Torah.

But every place is conducive for studying Torah.

The Torah was given in the desert, and not in Eretz Yisrael. Once again, this is to hint that everywhere, and every situation, is conducive for Torah. If one wants to study Torah, he will succeed, no matter where he is.

### **One Person Can Influence the Entire World**

People have aspirations to accomplish a lot. They want to be *mekarev* thousands of people to Torah and *emunah*. But is it possible?

The Chareidim says that it is, because Klal Yisrael are like one person.<sup>3</sup> They are united on the realm of

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3. It states (*Bereishis* 46:27), "כל הנפש לבית יעקב הבאה מצרימה שבעים, "All the soul of Yaakov's family, coming to Egypt, were seventy." Rashi (46:26) notes that it states *נפש*, soul, in singular tense, although there were seventy people. In contrast, Eisav's family were six, and the *pasuk*

their souls. Therefore, one person's teshuvah and one person's attachment to Torah brings an influence to all Yidden in the world.

The Chareidim (פס"ז י"ג) writes, "Since all of Bnei Yisrael are like one person...when one person becomes righteous it has an effect on all of Klal Yisrael. Also, when one person sins, it has a ripple effect on all Yidden. So, rouse yourself sincerely in *teshuvah*, and as you do *teshuvah*, intend that this should bring all Bnei Yisrael to *teshuvah*."<sup>4</sup>

The Chareidim adds that this is the explanation of the *pasuk* (*Hoshei'a* 14:2-3), שובה ישראל עד ה' אלקיכם... קחו עמכם ה' דברים ושובו אל ה' "Do *teshuvah*, Yisrael, until Hashem your

G-d... Take words and return to Hashem..." The beginning of the *pasuk* is talking to one person (*שובה* is in singular tense). The end of the *pasuk* is speaking to many people (as it states, קחו... (וישבו)). The Chareidim explains that this is because one person began doing *teshuvah*, and this resulted with many people doing *teshuvah*, because on the realm of the neshamos, his *teshuvah* influenced everyone to improve.

The Chareidim continues, "It states (*Hoshei'a* 14:5), כי שם אפי ממנו, 'I am no longer angry with him.' The Gemara (*Yoma* 86:) teaches from this *pasuk*, 'Even if only one person does *teshuvah*, Hashem forgives the *aveiros* of all Bnei Yisrael.' This is

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calls them נפשות, souls, in plural. Because Eisav's family worshiped many gods. Yaakov's family of seventy are called נפש, one soul, because they serve one G-d."

4. When performing a mitzvah, many people say בשם כל ישראל. One of the reasons is so the mitzvah will affect and inspire all Bnei Yisrael.

because his *teshuvah* rouses everyone else to *teshuvah*.

"Perhaps this is the explanation of the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 51:15), אלמדה פושעים, ררכיך וחמאים אליך ישובו 'I will teach sinners Your way, and I will bring sinners back to you.'" By returning with *teshuvah* himself, he brings others along with him back to Hashem.

Because we are like one person, and one person's *teshuvah* affects everyone.

The Chozeh of Lublin *zt'l* (quoted in *חינוך בית יהודה*) said:

"It is impossible for every person to go around the streets and to give *mussar* to people, and to bring them back to Torah. Because if he will do that, when will he learn Torah? Rather, when a person studies Torah *lishmah* - wherever he is - and he studies *בשם כל ישראל*, that it should be a merit for all of Bnei Yisrael, this will inspire thoughts of *teshuvah* in people's hearts. In this

manner, it is as if he gave *tochachah* (and taught them to go in Hashem's ways)."

This can be the translation of the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 84:6), אשרי אדם עון לו בכך, מסילות בלבכם, "Fortunate is a person whose strength is with You. The paths are in his heart." עון refers to Torah. The *pasuk* is saying that when one studies Torah, even all by himself, מסילות בלבכם, this opens up roads in others hearts, and rouses them to *teshuvah*.

The Chazon Ish writes in a letter (*Igros* vol.3, 62) "Just as the limbs of man serve different purposes: the eyes see, the ears hear, the hands do, etc., so is the nation like one body made of many people, and each person must do his part. If *bnei Torah* study Torah sincerely it will save many children and many adults from thoughts of sin and from heresy, etc. The holiness that will come forth from their learning Torah will pour forth a spirit of purity into the

world. In the neighborhoods where there are true *bnei Torah*, it is clearly noticeable the great influence they have on many people. If they tried to accomplish the same thing in any other way (other than their immersion in Torah study) they wouldn't succeed. Even the people who are very distant from Yiddishkeit are affected positively by their influence, only it isn't noticeable by them, because it is subtle and fine..."

We are discovering the amazing merits a Yid can attain. One might be studying Torah and think he isn't accomplishing too much. Actually, he is bringing thoughts of *teshuvah* and yearnings for Torah into the hearts of hundreds, maybe thousands, and perhaps millions, of people. We are all connected, our souls are one, and therefore each person's growth affects everyone else.

## Tzedakah

The Torah is eternal, applicable in every generation. How do we keep the mitzvah of ויקחו לי תרומה, donating towards the building of the Mishkan in our generation, today?

It is kept by giving tzedakah to the poor.

The purpose of the Mishkan was to bring *korbanos*, and in Hakadosh Baruch Hu's eyes, there's no greater *korban* than giving money to the poor. As the Yaavatz writes, "There is no *korban* that is more precious to Hakadosh Baruch Hu than supporting the poor... Therefore, everyone must strive to give tzedakah, according to his abilities."

It states (*Bereishis* 21:8), ויעש, אברהם משתה גדול ביום הגמל את יצחק, "Avraham made a large party the day Yitzchak was weaned."

The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 89:) tells that the Satan prosecuted against

Avraham and said, "Ribono Shel Olam, you gave this old man a child at a hundred years old. From the entire meal, couldn't he bring a תור או גוזל, bird, as a sacrifice before You?"

Hashem replied, "Avraham made this meal for his son, Yitzchak. If I will ask him to sacrifice his son, he will do so immediately."

Therefore, it states (*Bereishis* 22:1, at the beginning of *akeidas Yitzchak*), ויהי אחר הדברים, האלה "After the Satan's prosecution, והאלקים נסה את, Hashem tested Avraham" to prove Avraham's loyalty.

The Yaavatz (*Migdal Oz* 13:17) explains that if there were paupers at the party, Avraham would have fed them, and the Satan wouldn't have anything to

say. Because giving charity is like bringing *korbanos*. But there weren't any paupers around.<sup>5</sup> The Satan claimed that since he didn't give charity at this party, he should have brought a *korban*.

The Yaavatz writes that our situation is the opposite, because, "there are paupers around, and we are unable to bring *korbanos*..." Therefore, we should unquestionably be occupied in the great mitzvah of giving tzedakah. As the Yaavatz writes, "There is no *korban* that is more precious to Hakadosh Baruch Hu than supporting the poor... Therefore, everyone must strive to give tzedakah, according to his abilities."

The Mishnah (*Shekalim* 1:1) discusses the mitzvah of bringing *shekalim* to the

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5. As it states (*Bereishis* 21:8), Avraham made a משתה גדול, and Rashi explains, "[גדול implies] that גדולים, leaders of the generation were at this party: Shem, Ever, Avimelech." Tzaddikim were present, and *lehavdil* government officials were there, but the poor weren't.

Beis HaMikdash to buy *korbanos* together with the obligation to be cautious with *klayim*. As it states, באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים ועל הכלאים, "On *rosh chodesh Adar*, the *beis din* announces that people should give their shekels to the Beis HaMikdash and that they should be cautious there shouldn't be *klayim* growing in their fields..."

The Sfas Emes (שקלים תרל"ד) teaches that שקלים represents giving *tzedakah* and כלאים represents prison (בית כלא). The Sfas Emes explains that they are stated together because *tzedakah* is the way to be freed from the imprisonment of the *yetzer hara*. Everyone is imprisoned by the *yetzer hara* who forces people to act as he dictates, and with *tzedakah* one becomes free, and he can act as he knows he should. As it states (*Mishlei* 18:16), מתן אדם ירחיב לו, "Man's giving [*tzedakah*]

makes it broader for him." ירחיב means he is freed from the confines of the *yetzer hara*. And then one is happy, as it states, ולישרי לב, שמחה, "When one has a straight heart, freed from the *yetzer hara*, he is happy."

There was a person who seemed to have everything in this world: wealth, a family, everything a person could ask for, only he wasn't happy. He asked the Beis Yisrael *zt'l* for counsel how he could pull himself out of this melancholy state. The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* replied with the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 30:12), פתחה שקי, ותאזרני שמחה, "You opened my sack and You girded me with joy." This means one should open his money bag and give *tzedakah* to the poor, and then Hashem will gird him with joy.

Because a *segulah* for *simchah* is to support the poor.<sup>6</sup>

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6. One reason is because when one is focused on himself he is sad. But when one turns his focus towards helping others he is happy.

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 151:) says, "One should always pray [that he and his offspring be saved from poverty] because if it doesn't happen to him, it will happen to his children. And if it doesn't happen to his children, it will happen to his grandchildren. As it states, *הוא הדבר הזה... כי בגלל הדבר הזה... it is a גלגל הוא החזור בעולם*, the cycle of the world."

Reb Chiya said to his wife, "When a poor person comes, give him bread, so people will give bread to our children, too."

She asked, "Are you cursing them?"

He replied, "It's a *pasuk*, *כי בגלל*... It's a cycle that goes around in the world."

Therefore, the Torah says there should be rings on the *Shulchan*. As it states (25:26), *ועשית לו ארבע טבעות זהב*,

"You shall make four gold rings..." The *shulchan* represents wealth (see *Rashi* 25:24).<sup>7</sup> And the *Kli Yakar* (25:26) explains, "The round rings on the *shulchan* were to remind people that wealth goes around. With this in mind, one will feed poor people at his table. Furthermore, he will remember that the great reward in *Olam HaBa* [for giving *tzedakah*] will be like the rings, that don't have an end."

The *shulchan* was made from *shittim* wood. As it states (25:23), *ועשית שלחן עצי שטים*, "Make a *shulchan* from *shittim* wood..."

The *Rabbeinu b'Chaya* (quoting a *Midrash*) writes that *שטים* is *roshei teivos* for *שלום טובה ישועה מחילה* peace, goodness, salvations, atonement. He writes, "When a person has a good

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7. *Rashi* (25:24) writes, "The golden crown, *זר הזה*, [around the *shulchan*] is a sign of the crown of kingship. Because a table represents wealth and success. As people say, *שולחן מלכים*, the table of kings."

heart and he feeds the poor at his table, it is like a *korban* that atones... When the Beis HaMikdash stood, atonement came from the *mizbeiach*. Today, a person's table brings him atonement.

The chassidim of France had their coffins made from their table to show that a person doesn't take anything with him, other than the tzedakah he gave, and the kind deeds he did with his table. Therefore, Chazal (*Brachos* 54) says 'Whoever makes a long meal [to give time for paupers to come and join him] will live long.'<sup>18</sup>

A poor person came to the Kapitshtnitzer Rebbe, and the Rebbe saw that he needs a new hat. The Rebbe had a brand-new hat, which he never wore. He gave that hat to the pauper.

People who witnessed this asked the Rebbe, "You could have given him the hat you're wearing now, and kept the new hat for yourself."

The Rebbe replied, "I did save the new hat for myself. Because in Olam HaBa we wear the mitzvos we performed in this world. In Olam HaBa that will be my hat."<sup>9</sup>

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8. It states (*Shemos* 22:24), אם כסף תלוה את עמי את העני עמך, אם כסף תלוה, if you want that your money should be מלווה, come along with you to the grave, the counsel is את העני, help the poor. עמך, and then the money will remain with you forever.

Because Chazal (*Avos* 6:10) say, "Silver and gold and precious gems don't come along with the person, only Torah and good deeds."

9. The Kapitshtnitzer Rebbe *zt'l* said: "If you love *talmidei chachamim*, and you seek to help them in any way you can, that's אהבת תורה, loving Torah. If you love the wealthy people, that's אהבת ממון, loving money. *Ahavas Yisrael* is to love each yid, regardless of who he is..."

צדקה תציל ממות, "Tzedakah saves from death." This pasuk is written twice in *Mishlei* (11:4 and 10:2). The *Sefer Chasadim* (תרי"א) explains that this is referring to two kinds of tzedakah. One is to give money to the poor. The other is to collect money for the poor, which is also a form of tzedakah. As Chazal (*Bava Basra* 9.) say, גדול המעשה יותר מן העושה, "Bringing others to give tzedakah is greater than giving tzedakah yourself."<sup>10</sup>

There's also a third kind of tzedakah, and that is helping others with kind deeds. It can even be a smile, or it could be some kind words. That is also

considered a form of charity.

### Seek to Help Your Fellow Man

It states (25:20), והיו הכרובים... "The *keruvim*...their faces were facing one another."

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 99.) states, כשהיו ישראל עושין רצונו "When the Jewish nation did Hashem's will, the *keruvim* faced each other. When they didn't do Hashem's will, they [turned around] and faced the wall." The *Beis Yisrael zt'l* says that this implies that when the Jewish nation are thinking about how they can help their fellow man, that is called, עושין רצונו של

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**10.** The first year after his *chasunah*, Reb Yehudah Aryeh Narim Tzvi (ר' אה"צ) Deutch *zt'l*, was expected to come to his father-in-law for the Purim meal, but he was very late. The family heard that he was in Meah Shearim collecting money. When he finally came, they asked him, in shock, "We heard you were collecting money for yourself?!"

He replied, "Yes, it was for myself, because this will be my merits and portion in Gan Eden..."

מקום, doing Hashem's will. But when they turn away and don't help one another, they are not doing Hashem's will.

We can add that the faces on the *keruvim* were of children, who are pure from sins. Their wings were spread upwards, פורשי כנפיהם למעלה. These factors indicate to people who are at high levels. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean they are doing Hashem's will. Only when they face one another are they called עושיני רצונו של מקום, that they are doing Hashem's will.

Tzaddikim explain, פניהם איש אל אחיו, when people have love and compassion to each other, and there is no hatred between them, אל הכפרת, this atones for all their *aveiros*.

Once, at *shaleshudes*, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zt'l*, with immense *hislavavus*, said, "A person

can be a *talmid chacham*, an honorable person, but if he hurts a Yid even just a hairsbreadth, he lost all his value. He is worth nothing. Because *bein adam lechaveiro* is so important, and *shalom* is so great."

At another time, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai spoke about the Gemara (*Brachos* 5.) "If a person sees that troubles are coming to him, he should check his deeds. If he checks and doesn't find, he should attribute his troubles to *bitul Torah*."

*Bitul Torah* isn't his first assumption. Because if he has the sin of causing harm to others, it is more likely that his troubles come from that.

As Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil said, "Punishments in this world comes from *aveiros bein adam lechaveiro*. Sins that are *bein adam lamakom* are punished in the next world."<sup>11</sup>

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11. Reb Yisrael Salanter *zt'l* once washed his hands for bread with

Rebbe Moshe Leib Sassoover spent a lot of time raising money to redeem someone from jail. He assumed that this prisoner was unlawfully imprisoned, as was most often the case

in that era. Actually, that person was a thief and deserved to be in jail. Shortly after he was freed, he stole again, and was thrown into prison another time. Rebbe Moshe Leib

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the minimum, halachically required amount of water. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 62:) says, "I fill my hands with a lot of water and I receive handfuls worth of goodness." Therefore, there's an ideal, and a *hidur mitzvah*, to wash with a lot of water. But this time, he didn't. His students asked him about that, and he replied, "The water doesn't come here by itself. A maid brings the water from the well. How can I wash my hands in a better way if this will cause her to have to work harder?"

One of Reb Moshe Feinstein's *zt'l* children tell the following story:

Shortly after the *petirah* of their great father, a widow called one Friday and asked, "What time is candle lighting today?" He told her.

The following week she called again, as she wanted to know the time for lighting the Shabbos candles for that week. When this went on for a few weeks, Reb Moshe's son told her, "There's an easy way to know when to light the candles. You can buy a calendar; the times for lighting the Shabbos candles are written there."

The woman replied, "I didn't know about this simple counsel. For years I was calling your father every Friday, to ask him the time..."

This is a wonderful story, which shows the patience and compassion of Reb Moshe Feinstein *zt'l*. He didn't have extra time on his hands. There were serious questions that he dealt with on a daily basis. Nevertheless, he compassionately helped this woman and answered her question, each week.

was upset that he spent so much time helping a thief. "Who knows whether it was even a mitzvah?" he chided himself.

He decided to test it. The rule is, מצוה גוררת מצוה, one mitzvah brings the next one. If a great mitzvah comes his way, that would be a sign that saving that person was a mitzvah. If he isn't granted the opportunity to do another mitzvah, that would be his sign that it wasn't a mitzvah.

Indeed, another opportunity for *pidyon shevuyim* came up. He saved that person from jail,

but then he discovered that he too was a thief.

Rebbe Moshe Leib thought that he would at least strive to bring that person to *teshuvah*. He said, "Look what happened to you. You were thrown into prison because of your theft, and if you steal again, you are liable to go to jail again!"

The thief replied, "So what if I failed once? I can try better the next time."

Rebbe Moshe Leib said that this entire episode was to teach him this important lesson, "So what if I failed once? I can try better the next time. Perhaps the next time I will succeed."<sup>12</sup>

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## 12. Reb Moshe Leib learned another lesson from thieves.

This is the story:

Reb Moshe Leib Sassover *zt'l* was going through a forest, and was attacked by thieves. They would have killed him, but the chief thief recognized Reb Moshe Leib. Reb Moshe Leib had an open house - everyone could eat there - and in his youth, this thief ate many meals at Reb Moshe Leib's home. "Don't harm him!" he commanded his men. He said to Reb Moshe Leib, "I can't kill you. I owe this to you because of all the kindness you did for me in my

**Heightened Sensitivity**

One day, Reb Zelig saw that people were gathered in front of a house, and he

asked them what was going on.

“The bank put up this house for foreclosure,”

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youth. Instead, I will bring you to our hideout in the forest. My son is there and I want you to teach him Torah.”

Rebbe Moshe Leib tried teaching the boy Torah, but the child didn't understand anything. Every night, the father (the head of the thieves) tested his son, and when he didn't know well, the father hit him cruelly.

The son accepted the beatings in silence. He didn't emit the smallest moan or complaint.

Some weeks passed, and the boy still didn't understand anything. So the thief told Reb Moshe Leib that he can go home. He sent his son to go along with him, to show him the way out of the forest. As they walked, Reb Moshe Leib asked the child, “How were you able to accept all those beatings in silence?”

The boy answered, “That isn't difficult. One of the primary lessons thieves must learn is to be silent when beaten, so we don't reveal information on the other thieves, such as where they are hiding out and the like.”

“I understand. But you must have a technique. It seems impossible to remain silent when enduring such pain.”

The boy replied, “There are three things to think about:

- (1) Remember that the beatings won't be forever. Eventually they will end.
- (2) Think that the one who is beating you is your father, who has compassion on you.
- (3) Think that each whip is the last one.”

they told him. "The previous owner, *nebech*, wasn't able to pay his mortgage, and the bank took the house away. They are selling it to the highest bidder."

"How much is the house worth?" Reb Zelig asked.

"It's a large, comfortable house, worth four hundred thousand liras. But so far, the highest bidder is an Arab who is offering to pay half-price: two hundred thousand liras."

This was his opportunity. He called out, "I bid 220,000 liras."

No one bid higher. The bank gave him the rights to buy the home.

He returned home and happily told his wife that they just bought the house

of their dreams. But she said, "I refuse to live there. I don't want to benefit from someone else's *tzaros*. The previous owner and his family are certainly devastated that they lost their home. How can we just move in?"

Reb Zelig tried to talk sense to his wife. He said, "Would it be better if an Arab bought the house? It is very sad that they lost their home, but what does that have to do with us? We aren't taking the house away from them - the bank is."

"I don't care," his wife repeated. "I don't want to benefit on someone else's distress."

Reb Zelig asked Reb Moshe Klirs zt'l (the leader of

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Years later, Reb Moshe Leib said, "From that child I learned the path to accept *yesurim*: (1) To know that the hardships won't be forever. (2) The administrator is our Father in heaven, who has immense compassion on us. (3) Think that this is the last one, and from now on, everything will be good."

the Slonimer Chassidim of Teveria) what he should do.

Reb Moshe Klirs replied, "Let me tell you a story; it happened with your grandfather, Reb Noach Weinberg zt'l (the father of the Birkas Avraham). Reb Noach saw that a poor widow was selling her household items, outside of her home, and at discount prices. Among the items was a thick towel. Reb Noach knew that "Hirsh Michel" (a renowned Slonimer chossid and tzaddik) wanted just this type of towel, so Reb Noach bought it and gave it to Hirsh Michel as Hirsh Michel was about to go to the mikvah, for *shacharis*.

After *shacharis*, Hirsh Michel asked Reb Noach, "Where did you buy this wonderful towel?"

Reb Noach told him about the *almanah* who *nebach* had to sell her household items for her *parnassah*.

Hirsh Michel said, "Give it back to her, right away. She is surely upset that she lost this good towel, due to her poverty. I don't want to benefit from her distress."

"So," Reb Moshe Klirs concluded, "I agree with you that according to halachah, you may buy the house. However, if you were Hirsh Michel, you would say that you don't want to benefit from others *tzaros*."

Soon afterwards, some people put together enough money and bought the house back for the original owner.

There is a source in the Torah for this high level of sensitivity and caring:

The Sefer HaChinuch (mitzvah 505) writes, "There's a mitzvah that the entire tribe of Levi shouldn't take a portion from the booty that the Jewish nation gain when they enter in Eretz Yisrael and after a war. As it states (*Devarim* 18:1), לא יהיה

לכהנים ... חלק ונחלה, "The *cohanim*... shouldn't have a portion...' and the Sifri explains they shouldn't get a portion of the land or from the booty of war... The reason is because they are Hashem's servants and it isn't proper that they should use vessels that were grabbed away from others by a war. They should only bring into their homes vessels that come to them by peaceful means and honestly. They shouldn't use vessels that caused distress to a man or woman."

The Torah is referring to *milchemes mitzvah* [a war that is a mitzvah] and the people who lost the vessels were goyim. Nonetheless, the Torah teaches us the super level of sensitivity of a Yid, that it isn't proper for him to enjoy things that someone was upset to lose.

At a *pidyon haben*, the father of the child says *shehechiyanu* for the mitzvah. The Meiri asks: Why doesn't the *cohen* also

say *shehechiyanu*? He just earned five silver coins, and when one receives a present, the Gemara tells that he should say *shehechiyanu*.

The Meiri answers: The *cohen's* joy isn't complete because he knows that there are other *cohanim* who wish they would have received the five silver coins. His joy isn't complete when he knows that his happiness is causing others distress.

Someone asked the Chazon Ish *zt'l*: "Chazal praise the person who is *לומד על מנת לעשות*, who studies Torah with the intention to practice what he studies. What does this mean? Don't most people who study Torah intend to keep what they study?"

The Chazon Ish replied, "It means someone who studies Torah with the desire that he never say even the slightest word that might hurt even only one Yid, even for a short moment." This is the

sensitivity that the Torah desires from us. This is called studying Torah and keeping it.<sup>13</sup>

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**13.** Chazal say that *shidduchim* are difficult for Heaven, as was *keriyas Yam Suf*. Reb Chaim Kreisworth *zt'l* explained: “*Shidduchim* is even harder than *keriyas Yam Suf*, because when the sea split one entity was split into two. A *shidduch* is even harder, because a *shidduch* means to take two entities and to make them into one. That is an even greater achievement.

Someone told Rebbe Hershel of Ziditchov *zt'l*, “Someone is chasing me.”

Rebbe Hershel told him, “When two people are pulling a rope at both ends and one lets go, the other person loses his balance and falls. If you will stop thinking about the person who is chasing you, and if you will stop hating him, he will fall.”

Rashi in the beginning of *sefer Shemos* says that Yidden are beloved to Hashem like the stars, which He counts constantly. Chazal also tell us that when Hashem made the moon smaller, Hashem gave the stars to the moon, to appease it (see Rashi *Bereishis* 1:16). We can explain that Klal Yisrael are precious and beloved to Hashem, because they also have this tendency to seek peace, to make amends, and to appease.

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