



ואמר אלהם שמע "20:3
ישראל אתם קרבים היום
למלחמה על איביכם, אל
יך לבבכם אל תראו ואל
תחפזו ואל תערצו
"מפניהם"

"And you shall say to them: Hear Yisroel, today you are coming near to the battle against your enemies; let your heart not be faint; do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not break down before them." Rashi says that even just saying Krias Shema would make one worthy of being victorious in battle. Why is reciting Krias Shema such a great Zechus – that it alone is enough to save a person? We always learn this Parshah in the month of Elul – for there is a great lesson for us to learn from this about what the Avodah of the month of Elul is. The following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic and support the P'shat offered in the closing paragraph.

שני דברים בימינו "5:4 – דברים רבה

– Rebbe Yitzchok says that there are two things in the right hand of Hakodosh Boruch Hu: צדקה ותורה – righteousness and Torah. Tzedakah as it says in Tehillim 48:11 "צדק מלאה ימינך" – "Righteousness fills Your right hand." Torah as it says in Devorim 33:2 "מימינו" – "From His right hand He presented the fiery Torah to them." There are two things in His left hand: the soul and judgment. The Nefesh as it says in Iyov 12:10 "אשר בידו" – "That in His hand is the soul of every living thing." Din as it says, "ותאחז במשפט ידיו" – "And My hand holds onto justice." (When it wants to let us know the right hand – it explicitly says the right hand – we learn from this that whenever it says hand without specifying, that means that it is the left hand). Hakodosh Boruch Hu says: The soul and judgment are placed in My hand. Preserve the judgment and I will preserve your souls. This is what the words, "שופטים ושוטרים" refer to – that one should appoint judges and officers for himself – so that Hakodosh Boruch Hu will then preserve our souls.

Parshas Shoftim – שם משמאל

5670 – Midrash Rabbah 5:4 – The Midrash tells us about the things which are in the right and left hands of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The Gemara in Menochos 36b tells us that whenever it just speaks about Hakodosh Boruch Hu's hands, without defining which one, it refers to the left hand. (Of course,

Hakodosh Boruch Hu does not have hands – it is Kevayachol – some connection to it). What is the Midrash teaching us here about the "right and left" hand of Hakodosh Boruch Hu? It says in Sotah 47a "לעולם תהא שמאל דוחה" – "The left should always push away, while the right should bring closer." Hakodosh Boruch Hu runs the world with these two Middos. The Hisororos from above causes the heart of the person to act with that Midah which comes from above. On Rosh Hashanah, which is a time of Din, judgment, and the wicked are written and sealed in the book of death, this places within one's heart to push away the evil from himself. This is what it means, "שמאל דוחה" – that one should push away the evil so that מקרבת, the right hand, the hand of Tzedakah and Torah can bring one close. If one is repulsed by evil and pushes it away, then he is brought close from the heavens.

It says in Shir Hashirim 2:6 "שמאלו תחת לראשי וימינו תחבקני" – "His left hand was under my head, and His right hand embraced me." "שמאל" is speaking about Rosh Hashanah, a time of pushing away the evil, and "וימינו" – the right is speaking about Sukkos, when Hakodosh Boruch Hu brings us close – He embraces us. All of this is when one is not very interconnected to evil, and one can remove the evil from himself on his own. However, if one is completely entangled together with the evil, so much so that he is unable to disentangle himself, and that he is one with the evil, then he is unable to remove the evil by himself. Then Hakodosh Boruch Hu utilizes the right hand before the left hand, He brings the person close. He gives him Nitzotzos of Kedusha, sparks of Kedusha, to awaken him from his slumber, and then through the right hand bringing him close, he can then push away the evil, utilize the left hand. And then once the evil is removed from him, to have the right hand bring him close again – this time really bringing him close and not just to remove the evil. The Midrash says that Tzedakah is in the right hand, which represents the goodness which comes down from above, similar to when a wealthy person gives Tzedakah to the poor even though the wealthy person is not really giving the poor person the money – rather it is coming from above. Similarly, Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives a person

Ruchniyos and Gashmiyos from above. Really, a mere mortal does not have any real connection to the Torah Hakdosha, like it says in Yevomos 105b – Was Moshe fit to learn from the mouth of Hakodosh Boruch Hu?

Rather we only have connection to the Torah Hakdosha through a Matanah, a gift. This is Tzedakah and Torah in the right hand. The soul of a person before coming down to this world stood in the heavenly spheres and was only pushed down to this world so that it could remove the portion of evil from the נפש הבהמית so that it can be purified and be worthy of acquiring a holy place above. (The "animal soul" is one of the two souls of a Jew. It is the soul that gives life to the physical body and is the source of animalistic desires as well as innate Jewish characteristics such as kindness and compassion). This is the שמאל דוחה, the left pushing away, so that the ימין מקרבת, the right can bring close. Chazal tell us that the month of אני לדודי ודודי לי – is a Roshei Taivos for – I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. The month of Elul are days of great desire from Above, as Hashem wants His nation Klal Yisroel. אני לדודי – it is because Hakodosh Boruch Hu desires us. Rosh Hashana comes, and שמאל דוחה, to remove the evil; and then there is Sukkos, the ימין מקרב, to be together. Shabbos Kodesh is a time when there is left and right together. The Kedusha of Shabbos is so great, that it is an overpowering ימין, right, which connects the person to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, while at the same time there is the שמאל, that because of the Kedusha the person recognizes how far he really is from Hakodosh Boruch Hu. He must work to come closer to Him.

ואמר אלהם שמע "20:3 – רש"י

ישראל אתם קרבים היום למלחמה על איביכם, אל יך לבבכם אל תראו ואל תחפזו ואל תערצו – "מפניהם" – "And you shall say to them: Hear Yisroel, today you are coming near to the battle against your enemies; let your heart not be faint; do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not break down before them." Even if there is no Zechus, merit, in you except for Krias Shema, the recitation of Shema, for that alone you are worthy that He should save you.

ואמר אלהם שמע "20:3 – מזרחי

– "ישראל אתם קרבים היום למלחמה על איביכם

Rashi says on this Posuk that even if one only has the Zechus of Krias Shema, that alone is enough to make the person worthy of being saved. Rashi learns this from the seemingly extra words of "שמע ישראל" – as there really is no need for this, for it is obvious that the Kohen is addressing Klal Yisroel. That which the Torah uses these words of שמע ישראל, is to teach us that if one recites שמע ישראל – Krias Shema, that is enough to make him worthy of being saved.

ואמר אלהם "20:3 - שם משמאל
"שמע ישראל אתם קרבים היום למלחמה על איביכם
 – "And you shall say to them: Hear Yisroel, today you are coming near to the battle against your enemies." Rashi says that the Zechus of Krias Shema alone is enough to save Klal Yisroel in battle. Why do we call Krias Shema being Mekabel Ol Malchus Shomayim, when isn't it all about attaching oneself and loving Hakodosh Boruch Hu? Why is that called an עול, a yoke? The answer is that while it is true we are supposed to love Hashem and attach ourselves to Him, nonetheless, when we do the Mitzvos of the Torah, we are to do them as an עול, as a yoke, for He commanded us to do so, as the Mishna in Avos says, "בטל רצונך מפני רצונו" – nullify your desire in front of the desire of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. One is to nullify his own desires, so that his sole purpose is to follow the Ratzon, of Hashem. Achieving this level of service to Hashem is a great level.

The Chozeh from Lublin says that when one Chas V'sholom has a Tza'ar come upon him, and he goes in front of Hakodosh Boruch Hu and is Mispalel, he should remove his own personal pain, and he should be Mispalel for the Shechinah. The Gemara in Sanhedrin 46a tells us that when a Yid has Tza'ar, so too the Shechinah has that Tza'ar, the Shechinah shares that Tza'ar along with you. If one Davens for himself that the Tza'ar should be removed from him, there are Mekatragim, prosecutors, who block the Tefilos from going to their intended destination. However, if one is Mispalel to remove the Tza'ar that the Shechinah has in sharing in his individual Tza'ar, then the Mekatragim are quiet and do not attempt to block those Tefilos, for they cannot say anything against the Shechinah. This is the power of Krias Shema that one can tap into, that one is to nullify his own desires to the desires

of Above – all is for the Ratzon Hashem. This is what Chodesh Elul is about, which comes before Tishrei. אלול comes from a Loshon of אלל as it says in Iyov 13:4 – to nullify. One is to embed into his thoughts that he should nullify his own desires and make himself nothing more than a vessel to follow the Ratzon Hashem. This way, when Rosh Hashanah and Yom Hakippurim come, all of his Tefilos will be for the sake and honor of Hashem. As we say in Shemoneh Esrei during these holy days, "ונכתבינו בספר החיים" – we are asking for life for the sake of our Living G-d – for the sake of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, so that we can continue serving Him and bring about great Kovod Shomayim. Doing this will close the mouths of all Mekatragim, and one's Tefilos will be answered.

Parshas Shoftim שופטים "Devorim 16:18- 5676

"ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך
 – "You shall appoint judges and officers in all of your gates." Chazal explain on this Posuk that each and every person is to place judges and officers on his gates, on the gates to his heart. Rebbe Chaim Vital says that the five senses that a person has: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, are the five gates to the heart of a person. All of these senses connect to the heart. "שופטים ושוטרים" – judges and officers are also relevant to each individual. The Shoftim, the judges, this is the intellect of a person which needs to judge and decide what is the proper thing to do, what is the path to Kedusha and what is not. Even if the intellect judges upon something, it still needs to be carried out, the heart must overcome its desires and follow the rulings of the intellect – and that is the Shotrim, the officers who carry out the directives. Shabbos Kodesh is a day of great Kedusha. It is a day when one does not need to work so hard on the Shoftim part, on judging, for the Kedusha of Shabbos illuminates the hearts of Klal Yisroel, so that it is very easy to discern the proper path. There are three Seudos that one is to eat on Shabbos; there is the extra Tefilah of Musaf, and Krias HaTorah, which these five correspond to the five senses of a person – the five gates of the heart of a person. The Kiddush that one recites is inclusive of it all (including Havdalah – as Chazal tell us, זכרה בכניסתו וזכרה כי יפלא "17:8). It says in the Posuk "ומך דבר למשפט בין דם לדם ביו דין לדין ובין נגע לנגע

דברי ריבות בשעריך וקמת ועלית אל המקום אשר "If a matter of judgment will be hidden from you, between blood and blood, between verdict and verdict, or between affliction and affliction, matters of dispute in your cities – you shall rise and ascend to the place that Hashem, your G-d, shall choose." The Torah is telling you that you need to figure out how to choose the proper path. There are times that it is difficult to navigate in this dark and scary world. How does one navigate to the light? The Torah tells us, "You shall rise to ascend to the place that Hashem will choose." What place is that? The choice place in this world is the Makom Hamikdash. The choice time is Shabbos and Yom Tov. Shabbos is a very holy day. One should not Chas V'sholom allow even one Shabbos to go by and one to be busy with silliness and foolishness. One must use Shabbos Kodesh to navigate this world. Shabbos Kodesh is a day when the light of Kedusha illuminates the darkness in this world, so that one will know how to navigate this world and stay on the proper path of Avodas Hashem.

Now we can understand what is so great about reciting Shema, and what the Avodah of the month of Elul is. One is to recite Shema – to accept upon himself Ol Malchus Shomayim. It is not about thinking that it makes sense to perform the Mitzvos, and which ones make him feel good. Rather it is all about being אלו, nullifying oneself to the Ratzon Hashem. One is supposed to think about what does Hashem really want from him, and that is what he is to do. How does one know what Hashem wants from us? The Chachamim tell us how we are to live our lives – what Hashem wants from us. To prepare for the upcoming Yomim Nora'im, one must work on the month of אלול – nullifying oneself. If one nullifies himself to the desire of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, then he will be Zoche to be successful in judgment. In the month of Elul one needs to do true introspection about life, and what it's all about. Shabbos is a day of great Kedusha – and we must utilize it, especially during this crucial month before the days of Awe, to seek out Hashem, so that the proper path of Avodas Hashem is illuminated for us. May we be Zoche to use these special days of the month of Elul properly, so that we be Zoche to a Kesiva Vechasima Tovah.