

בעזרת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

**Rabbi Meir Isamar
Rosenbaum shlita**

Va'eschonon



The Way of Emunah

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Parshas Va'eschronon



One Who Recognizes His Lowliness, Merits a Free Gift/The Power of a Poor Man's Prayer/Humility Leads to Salvation/Tefillah Through Song/One Tefillah to Help Moshe/Tefillah Measures the Temperature of a Jew/Understanding the Meaning of the Words/The Most Important Time of the Day/Fighting the Yeitzer Hara With Tefillah/Like the Sun/Praying Before a Trouble Arises/Enthusiasm for Nishmas/Meriting Abundant Livelihood Through Prayer/The Hishtadlus of Tefillah/Increasing Prayers/A Prayer Never Hurts/Emunah in Tefillah/The Power of Tefillah With Temimus

וַאֲתַחֲנֵן אֵל ה' בְּעֵת הַהוּא וְגו' (ג, כג)

And I prayed to Hashem at that time. (3:23)

One Who Recognizes His Lowliness, Merits a Free Gift:

Rashi says that the word “*chanun*” always indicates asking for a “*matnas chinam*” (a free gift). He says that even though *tzadikim* have merits, they only ask for free gifts. This is as Hashem says (Shemos 33:19): “*V’chanosi es asher achun*. (I will favor and provide free gifts whom I want to

favor.)” This is also stated in the Medrash (Devarim Rabbah 2:1) which cites these sources as proof that if doesn’t have sufficient mitzvos or good deeds, he is given a free gift.

Rav Yaakov Aryeh of Radzimin zy”a (quoted in Sefer Bikurei Aviv, Michtav Kodesh) asks how one who doesn’t deserve anything could have the audacity to ask for a free gift. He answers

that when one realizes that he deserves nothing, and all his efforts to serve Hashem are worthless, his heart will break inside him. **Since Hashem never refuses a broken heart, he can then ask for a free gift.**

In this vein, the Shem M'Shmuel writes in the name of his father, the Avnei Nezer *zt"l*, that if one recognizes that he deserves nothing, and he relies solely on his *tefillos* to Hashem, **in this merit he is given a free gift.**

The Power of a Poor Man's Prayer:

On this topic, Rav Shimshon Pinkus *zt"l* (Sefer Tiferes Shimshon) says as follows:

Chazal describe the extent of the *tefillos* of Moshe Rabenu to

be allowed to enter the land. They say (Devarim Rabbah 11:10) that he donned sackcloth and coated himself with ashes. He then stood in prayer and supplication before Hashem until the Heavens and earth and the entire order of creation shook.

Hashem then issued a proclamation to every gate of Heaven and to every Heavenly court not to allow the prayers of Moshe to enter and not permit them to ascend to Him because the decree had already been sealed.

Hashem called all the ministering angels and told them, "Hurry and close every gate to Heaven because the sounds of his prayers are strongly pushing upwards and are trying to ascend." His prayers were like a sword that cuts through

everything in its path. They were like the “*Shem Hameforesh*” that he had learned from the Divine beings.

The Medrash concludes: At that time, Hashem said, “I heard from behind Me the sound of a *ra’ash gadol* (great commotion, Yechezkel 3:12).” And ‘*ra’ash*’ always means “*zeya*” (exertion). And there is no “*gadol*” like Moshe, as is stated (Shemos 11:3): “This man, Moshe, is very ‘*gadol*’ in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of the nation.”

When we contemplate the greatness of the prayers of Moshe Rabenu, it is important to note the words of the Zohar Hakadosh (Parshas Balak, 195A). It states that there are three types of *tefillos*: “Tefillah L’Moshe”, “Tefillah L’Dovid” and “Tefillah L’Ani”. The loftiest of the three

is “Tefillah L’Ani” (the prayer of a poor man) because a poor man davens with a broken heart, and it is stated (Tehillim 34:19) that Hashem is close to the brokenhearted and He hears his words. Therefore, when a poor man prays, all the windows of Heaven are opened for him.

These words are unbelievable! Moshe Rabenu’s *tefillos* were on the level of the ‘*Shem Hameforash*’ and they were able to cut through the Heavens like a sword, but the *tefillos* of a poor man who davens with a broken heart are even greater! Therefore, one must always be careful not to wrong a poor man, lest he daven to Hashem against you, as his prayers are always heard.

He concludes: **“In general, the best advice for a good, fortunate life is for a person to act like a poor man before**

Hashem by praying with a broken heart. Through this, the windows of Heaven will open for him and he will be showered with much blessing, success and Divine assistance.”

Humility Leads to Salvation:

Rav Yaakov Meir Schechter *shlita* writes on the topic of *tefillah* (Sefer V’Nichtav B’Sefar, Chelek 2, page 248):

“If one has a lowly spirit, his prayers will not be rejected (see Sanhedrin 43B). Perhaps, this is the meaning behind Chazal’s statement (Brachos 10B): ‘One should not stand in a high place and pray; rather, one should stand in a low place and pray.’ When one considers himself lowly, he knows well that he doesn’t deserve anything and

that everything he receives is a result of Hashem’s desire. Therefore, he prays properly. He begs Hashem for a free gift, even though he is unworthy and deserves nothing. **A prayer like this is greatly valued by Hashem and can lead to great salvations. And even when one merits a salvation, he will know that it comes from Hashem and he will thank and praise him, and such a person is worthy of receiving his salvation.”**

Tefillah Through Song:

Sefer Ohr L’Shomayim explains Moshe Rabenu’s *tefillah* to Hashem by citing the explanation of Sefarim Hakedoshim (Shlah Hakadosh on Parshas Shemos, Torah Ohr) of the Medrash (Shemos Rabbah 23:5) that

says: “*Tzadikim* will say *shira* in the future.” They explain that *tzadikim* possess a very high level of *emunah* and, as a result, when they need to daven for a certain thing, they pray in the form of a *shira*. Their trust in Hashem is so strong that they are certain that He will fulfill their request, so they sing and praise Him as if it has already happened.

This was the level of Moshe. Whenever he prayed, it was in the form of a *shira*.

The Baal Haturim notes that the word “*va’eschonon*” has the same *gematria* as the word “*shira*”. This indicates that Moshe’s *tefillah* was in the form of a song of praise and thanks to Hashem.

One Tefillah to Help Moshe:

The Medrash (Devarim Rabbah 7:10) relates: “Rav Shmuel bar Yitzchok said: Moshe was close to death and the people did not daven for him to be able to enter the land. He gathered them and began to rebuke them. He said, ‘One (man) redeemed 600,000, and 600,000 can’t redeem one man? Did Hashem not give you a heart to understand (Devarim 29:3)?’ He told them, ‘Do you not remember all that I did for you in the desert...’”

The Sefas Emes (Likutim) states that the reason Klal Yisroel did not daven for Moshe was probably because they thought that if his prayers didn’t work, theirs surely wouldn’t. However, they were incorrect because the truth was that he was only missing “one more prayer”, which is why Hashem commanded him to stop

davening (Devarim 3:20). If Klal Yisroel had prayed that *tefillah* for him, it would have worked. Moshe, however, was unable to ask them directly to do it, as this was also forbidden by Hashem as part of his command to stop. Instead, he hinted to them that **if they had prayed one *tefillah* for him, he would be able to enter the land.**

Tefillah Measures the Temperature of a Jew:

Tefillah is one of the four things that needs constant encouragement (Brachos 32B). The Chasam Sofer *zy"ra* is said to have compared *tefillah* to a thermometer. Through prayer, one can measure the "temperature" of his Yiddishkeit. **If one davens with enthusiasm, it is a sign that his Yiddishkeit**

is warm and fiery. If, however, one davens by rote, it is a sign that his Yiddishkeit is cold and needs strengthening.

A man once came to the Satmar Rov *zy"ra* and related that a bochur had been suggested as a *shidduch* for his daughter but he had been unable to obtain accurate information, as some of the people he asked greatly praised the boy, while others weren't as complimentary. He said that he didn't know whom to believe. The Rov told him, "Go see how he davens. From the way he davens, you'll be able to tell what type of Yid he really is."

He used this idea to explain the pasuk (Mishlei 27:21): "A man according to his praise." **How can one determine what type of person a man is? By seeing how warmly and**

enthusiastically he davens and praises Hashem.

Understanding the Meaning of the Words:

Still and all, one should not think that he cannot daven if he isn't feeling enthusiastic and fiery at the moment. That is not a reason to push off a *tefillah*. Rather, one should daven as well as one can at the time.

It is related that a man once came to the Bais Yisroel of Gur *zy"ra* and sadly said that his *tefillos* were not coming out with as much emotion as he would like. He said, "*Es davent zich nisht.*"

The Rebbe replied, "Look in Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Tefillah. You won't find any halacha that one must be

enthusiastic or emotional when he davens. All you will find is that it says that **everyone must daven three *tefillos* every day and one must attempt to understand the simple meaning of the words. It doesn't say anything more than that.**"

(It is said in the name of Rav Shalom of Belz *zy"ra*, "Just from davening and understanding the words, one can reach levels of *ruach hakodesh* and the revelation of Eliyahu Hanavi.")

The *tzadikim* of Lechovitch-Kobrin would say, "**We daven one word and then another word, until it becomes a war.**"

This is like two people who are arguing, with each stating his opinion, until it gets so heated that a real fight breaks out. So too, we say one word after another, getting more enthusiastic with each word,

until we arouse real emotion.

The Most Important Time of the Day:

The Kuzari writes: “For a *chasid*, the time of *tefillah* is the main time, whilst the other hours represent the preparations that lead to this important time (eating, learning Torah and everything else are like preparations for his *tefillos*). Those three times of daily prayer are the fruit of his day and night. He looks forward to this time because while it lasts he resembles the spiritual beings, and is removed from merely physical existence.

“This order of times of *tefillah* represent the needs of the soul. Prayer is for his soul what nourishment is for his body.

of the next, just as the strength derived from the morning meal lasts until supper. The further his soul is removed from the time of prayer, the more it is darkened by coming in contact with worldly matters. This is even more so if necessity brings him into the company of youths, women, or wicked people; when one hears unbecoming and soul-darkening words and songs which sully the purity of the soul because these are things that are an attraction for his soul which he is unable to overpower. **During prayer he purges his soul from all that passed over it, and prepares it for the future.”**

Fighting the Yeitzer Hara With Tefillah:

“One prayer lasts until the time

Since *tefillah* is such powerful,

good force, the *yeitzer hara* fights bitterly to obstruct it. Sefer M'Ohr Vashemesh (Parshas Ki Seitzei) writes that the *yeitzer hara's* main focus is on *tefillah*. While it also tries to stop a person from learning Torah, doing mitzvos, and performing acts of kindness, it works much harder against *tefillah*. It does this by assailing a person with foreign thoughts that distract him while he is trying to daven. Therefore, one must try very hard to banish all outside thoughts while he is davening. If one succeeds in doing so, he reaches an extremely lofty level of almost completely stripping away his connection to the physical world (see Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chaim 98:1). The *yeitzer hara* does everything in its power to stop this from happening, so one must be constantly on guard.

Like the Sun:

One should never think that he is unworthy of davening. Even if one feels that he quickly loses the sanctity he feels while he is davening, that should not cause him to lose hope.

Sefer Chemda Genuza (Chelek 2, page 195) quotes Rav Yehoshua of Tomashov *zy"u* as saying in the name of his father, Rav Yosele of Tomashov *zy"u* (a student of the Chofetz of Lublin *zy"u*) that one should never say: In my entire life, I have never davened properly. I have never done a single mitzvah properly. Even when I do manage a bit of *avodah*, I lose the inspiration soon thereafter. Why should I even try?

One should never even think this because such thoughts could lead him to lose everything.

Rather, one should say that the past is over and done with, and from now on, I commit to improve and do everything I can to daven and serve Hashem properly

The proof of this is from the sun. Starting from the morning, it gets higher and stronger until midday. It then begins to get lower and weaker, until it disappears from the horizon completely. Still and all, it gets up again the next day and shines again. It doesn't say: Why should I even try? Even if I reach the heights, I will end up falling. Rather, it does its part and doesn't worry about what was in the past. That is how one's *avodah* should be.

This is the meaning of the pasuk in Tehillim (113:30): "From the rising of the sun until its setting, the name of Hashem is

praised." **We see how the sun rises every day, only to set afterwards, and it never gives up. So too, we should praise Hashem every day and not worry about our setbacks of the past.**

Praying Before a Trouble Arises:

One should not wait for a problem to arise before davening to Hashem. Rather, one should daven even in good times, and this will serve to help him when difficulties appear. I saw a sefer that compares this to a soldier who always walks with his gun at the ready so that if an enemy comes close, he will be prepared to fight him. If he would only run to get his gun when he sees an enemy approaching, it would be too late. So too, **one should**

daven in advance in order to have his tefillos ready to help him when he needs them.

The Noam Eliezer of Skuleny" states that some people only say Tehillim in hard times. When everything seems fine, they think that they don't need to say Tehillim now because they don't need a *yeshua* at this time.

He counters this mindset by explaining why we call chapters of Tehillim "*kapitlach*". A "*kapital*" literally means an "account". We call Tehillim by this name because it is just like a bank account, in which one saves up money for when he needs it. So too, when a person says Tehillim constantly, he will be adding a lot of "funds" to his account, which he can withdraw whenever he needs them.

When one is in the midst of a

difficulty, it is often hard to concentrate on his *tefillos*. Therefore, it is good to fill up one's account of Tehillim in advance, so that they are ready to be "withdrawn" when needed."

Enthusiasm for Nishmas:

Rav Hershe of Rimanov zy" would recite Nishmas during Shacharis on Shabbos every week before the *amud* in a loud voice. He said the words with much enthusiasm and with a sweet tune. Sefer Beeros Hamayim relates that he once asked a question. What is the meaning of the words "*nishmas kol chai sevarech*" (the souls of every living being shall bless). Of course the souls should bless Hashem! Who would do it if not living souls? He answered that

until this point, the soul and body blessed Hashem together. One we reach this part of the *tefillah*, however, one ascends beyond the physical aspects of his body, and his neshama blesses Hashem on its own.

My ancestor, the Yitav Lev of Sighet zy”a, was a student of Rav Hersh of Rimanov. However, his custom was only to recite out loud the end of Nishmas – beginning with the words “*ad heina azarunu rachamecha*”. He would say, “I don’t feel that I am on the level to say the entire Nishmas out loud. But when I get to ‘*ad heina*’, I can’t hold myself back from raising my voice.”

Meriting Abundant Livelihood Through Prayer:

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 92A) states: “Anyone who has intelligence will end up getting rich.” The Maharsha asks that it is stated (Koheles 9:11) that wise men do not become wealthy. He answers by citing the Gemara (Niddah 70B) that says that the residents of Alexandria asked Rav Yehoshua what a person can do to become rich. He answered that one should engage in commerce and be honest in business. They told him that many people had tried this and had not been successful. He answered, “Instead, one should pray for mercy to the One who owns all wealth.”

Accordingly, the Gemara’s intent is that if one has intelligence, he will realize that engaging in business cannot create wealth and he must daven to Hashem. Once he does this,

he will merit to become rich.

The Hishtadus of Tefillah:

The Ramchal (Sefer Derech Hashem, Chelek 4, Perek 5) writes: “When one comes close and stands before Hashem, asks Him for all his needs, and casts his burden upon Him, **that is the start and main aspect of his *hishtadlus***. After this, when he does his other means of *hishtadlus*, which are the physical efforts, he won’t get sunk too deeply into them because he relies on Hashem...”

In other words, **one’s main *hishtadlus* is *tefillah* – not work or businesses**. If one recognizes this, his *emunah* will be strong and he will know that He is the true source of his livelihood.

Increasing Prayers:

Still and all, a person sometimes needs to daven many times before he is answered. Even if one’s *tefillos* are not fulfilled in the beginning, he should keep davening because he doesn’t know how many prayers are needed to open the gates of Heaven.

Sefer Meor Einayim explains that whenever blessing is sent to us from Above, prosecutorial forces are aroused to try and block them. The way to get around them is to daven to Hashem. Every *tefillah* helps push the blessings through the obstructions. This can take a number of prayers to accomplish, so one should keep davening, even if he does not see an answer at first.

This is especially true

regarding the blessing of *parnassah*. The *yeitzer hara* does all it can to stop us from receiving our livelihood because it knows that we will use the money for charity and kind deeds. **The Chida writes (Sefer Avodas Hakodesh) that *tzedakah* atones even for deliberate sins. Therefore, it is obvious why the *yeitzer hara* does all it can to stop it from occurring.** For this reason, one must daven a lot for *parnassah* until the blessing breaks through and reaches him.

Furthermore, some times are not as auspicious for prayers to be heard as others. Therefore, one should pray at all times in order to ensure that he davens at an “*eis ratzon*” for *tefillos* to be accepted.

The *pasuk* states (Tehillim 81:11): “Open you mouth wide and I will fill it.” Sefer Beeros Mayim

quotes Rav Hersh of Rimanov zy”a as explaining this to mean that one should “open his mouth wide” by reciting many *tefillos*, and Hashem will then “fill it” by fulfilling his request, as he certainly prayed at an *eis ratzon*.

Sefer Likutim Yekarim quotes Rav Rafael of Bershad zy”a as saying that one should never stop davening for his needs, even if he needs to do so 100 times a day. One should even daven in his own language and his own words and say, “**Ribono Shel Olam, please give me *parnassah*.**” And Hashem will certainly hear his words.

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a said that the reason most wealthy men are simple people is because they pray to Hashem in their own, simple words and ask him to grant them wealth. They don’t claim to have any merits, and

simply ask for His help, and He fulfills their desire.

Tefillah Never Hurts:

Chazal say (Yerushalmi Brachos 4:4): “If only a person would daven all day! Why? Because a prayer can never hurt.”

Every prayer leaves an impression even if we can't always see the effects immediately. Sometimes the results are only seen years later, and sometimes not until several generations pass.

It is related that there was a childless woman who tearfully prayed by the gravesite of Rochel Imeinu. She asked Rochel to intercede on her behalf so that she should be granted children and cried, “Mama Rochel! You know the pain of

not having children. Please ask for mercy for me so that I may have a son this year!”

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz *zt”l* was there at the time and heard her heartfelt cries. He emotionally declared, “**There is no doubt in my mind that she will have a son this year. I ask that I should be given the honor of *sandak* at the *bris*.**”

And so it was.

Emunah in Tefillah:

A *tefillah* uttered with *emunah peshutah* and *temimus* has the power to break through the Heavens and arouse Divine compassion.

It is related that a *talmid chochom* who lives in Eretz Yisroel once was diagnosed with a dreaded disease. The doctors

said that there was no hope for him and gave him only a short while to live.

Some of his acquaintances suggested that he travel to America to be seen by a top doctor who might be able to help him. Someone approached a leading Posek and explained to him the entire situation. He asked if it was worthwhile for him to travel to America for a small chance of a cure, and the Posek said, "In my opinion, it is not worthwhile to do this."

A few days later, the *talmid chochom's* wife came to the Posek's home and asked to speak with him. She began to cry and said, **"If, *chas v'shalom*, the worst occurs, will be able to look my orphaned children in the face and tell them that I did all I could for their father? Will I have what to answer if**

Bais Din Shel Maaloh asks me if I did everything in my power?"

The Posek accepted her words and said that the sick man should travel to see the doctor in America. Those close to him knew that he rarely retracted from a *p'sak*, so they asked him what made him do that this time. He answered, **"When I heard what this lady had to say, I realized that she possessed a tremendous power of *emunah* and *tefillah*. I then knew that she has a tremendous ability to change situations through her prayers.** Therefore, I recognized that her husband could be saved if they go to America."

It is said that Rav Dovid of Lelov zy"ra was once trying to hammer a nail into the wall when he accidentally hit his hand instead. His hand was badly injured and bloody. He later said

that he learned from this episode that one must daven to Hashem for even the smallest things. Even if one just wants to bang a nail into a wall, he has to daven to Hashem for the hammer to hit the nail and not to hit his finger.

The Power of Tefillah With Temimus:

The following story depicts the power of a heartfelt prayer uttered with *temimus*. It is related in Sefer Sipurei Tzadikim (Parshas Bechukosai) in the name of the Maharash of Lubavitch zy"i, who heard it from his father, the Tzemach Tzedek zy"i.

In a village near Yerushalaim, there lived an unlearned man. He was so ignorant that he didn't even know the meaning of the words of the *tefillos* or what prayers to say and when. Once a

week, he would come to Yerushalaim to sell the fruits and vegetables he grew in his field. While he was there, he would go to one of the Rabbanim, who would write down for him on a piece of paper which *tefillos* to say that week and when.

One time, he came to Yerushalaim during the month of Cheshvon. He told the Rov that he wouldn't be coming for a few weeks because it was the rainy season and the roads would be too muddy for travel. He asked him to write down the *tefillos* for the upcoming few weeks.

Two weeks later, he needed to go to Yerushalaim for a specific reason, and he made the effort to get there. When he arrived, he saw that all the stores were closed. He saw a Jew walking by wrapped in his *talis* and asked

him, “Did I make a mistake? Is it Shabbos today?”

The man answered that it was not Shabbos. “So why are all the stores closed,” the villager asked.

The man told him, “It is a public fast day.”

The villager was shocked that the Rov hadn’t written on his paper that any fast days were coming up. He was very upset that he had eaten that day and he hadn’t said the special *tefillos* for a *taanis tzibur*. He found the Rov in shul and ran over to him while yelling, “Why did you do this to me?”

The Rov looked at him and asked, “What do you mean, my son?”

The villager said, “Why didn’t you write that today would be a

taanis? Because of your mistake, I transgressed and ate and I didn’t say the right prayers!”

The Rov told him, “I didn’t make a mistake. This isn’t a standard *taanis*. Rather, we are fasting because there is a drought and we haven’t received any rain.”

The villager looked stunned and asked, “Why do you need to declare a fast day for that?”

The Rov thought the simple man hadn’t understood him, so he asked, “What do you think we should do when we need rain?”

“I’ll tell you what I do when it doesn’t rain,” the villager said. **“I go out to my field, look up to Hashem and say: ‘Father! I need rain.’ And it always starts raining right away.”**

When the Rov heard these words said with such *temimus*, he said, “Can you please do this for us?”

The villager walked out of the shul and tearfully proclaimed, “Tatte! Please send rain for Your children in the holy city!”

Immediately, rain began to fall.

The Maharash concluded this story by saying, “A *tefillah* uttered with *temimus* by a simple Jew is almost as powerful as the prayer of the early tzadikim.”

He would also say, “A *tamim* is never refused by Hashem because he doesn’t understand any complexities. He just asks for what he needs and is provided with it.”



בס"ד

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