

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
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Shlita*

Voeschanon



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Torah Wellsprings - Voeschanon

The Concealed Good of Galus

The month we are in is called **אב**, and the Ben Ish Chai says that in the future, it will be "the father" of all months. When Moshiach comes, all the hardships of galus will 'turn over' and become immense chesed, as it states (Tehillim 90:15) **שְׂמַחְנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ שְׁנוֹת רֵעֵינוּ**, "Make us happy according to the days You afflicted us."

It states in this week's parashah (4:30), **בְּצָר**, "When you are in distress and all these things have befallen you, at the end of days..." The Chesed l'Avraham of Radomsk zt'l explains, **בְּצָר**, when it appears to *you* as though it is a tzarah. However, **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים**, at the end of days, you will see that it was all chesed, all for your good. Then it will be **וּמִצְאוֹן**, like someone who finds a treasure. He writes, "Just as when one finds a large treasure, he is very happy with it, so too, a person will rejoice with the tzaros he had in the past. Then he will understand how it was all for the good."

Therefore, it states (Yeshayah 40:1) **נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי**, "Comfort, comfort My nation, says your G-d." **יֵאמֶר** is written in future tense, and it is an expression for soft-spoken words (אמירה רכה, in contrast to דיבור). **אֱלֹקֵינוּ** is Hashem's name that represents *midas hadin*. Thus, **יֵאמֶר אֱלֹקֵינוּ** means that in the future, people will say and understand that even the *din* was all kindness. It was a hidden treasure, all for our good.

It states (Tehillim 96:11), **וְתִגַּל הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ**, "The heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice..." The Tiferes Shlomo (Rosh Hashanah) writes, "Yisrael are believers, children of believers. They have to understand that the reality of galus is concealed, and in the future, everyone will see that it was all for the good. The letters of **וְתִגַּל**, "rejoice", spell **גְּלוּת**." Then we will know the joy of all the good we received in galus.

It states, (4:34) **כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָכֶם ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמַצְרֵיכֶם**, "Everything Hashem, your G-d, did for you... before your eyes." Rebbe Boruch'l of Mezhibuzh zt'l explains that the yesurim of galus are **לְעֵינֶיךָ**, to your eyes, how you perceive them. In actuality, they were all for the good. There will come a time when we will recognize this.

It states, (4:7) **כִּי מִי גוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר לֹא אֱלֹהִים קָרְבִּים**, "For which is a great nation that has a G-d Who is close to it..." The Sfas Emes taught, **אֱלֹהִים קָרְבִּים** tells us that even when Hashem treats us with the attribute of **אֱלֹהִים**, which is *midas hadin*, even then, it is all good, because **קָרְבִּים**, Hashem is close to us. It is all love, and for their good. As it states, (Tehillim 73:1) **אֲנִי טוֹב לִישְׁרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים**, which indicates that even when it is **אֱלֹהִים**, the attribute of *din* and harsh justice, even then, **אֲנִי טוֹב לִישְׁרָאֵל** it is only goodness for Yisrael.

The word **חַיִּימָה**, anger, is *roshei teivos* for (Tehillim 33:5) **הַחֶסֶד ה' מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ**, "Hashem's kindness fills the earth."¹

1. A blind person is called **סָגִי נְהוֹר**, "a lot of light". Shouldn't it be the opposite? A blind person experiences darkness, not light! The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt'l explains that, presently, a blind person experiences darkness, but his yesurim will be a source of immense light for him – in the future. This is because, for Yidden, darkness is the precursor of the goodness and bright light that will be revealed in the future.

It states (Tehillim 49:5) **אֶפְתָּה בְּכִנּוּר חִידָתִי**, "With a harp, I will solve my riddle", but no riddle is mentioned in this chapter! Reb Yonason Eibshitz zt'l answers that the riddle is the universal question that everyone asks: Why was it destined that I must suffer? "The answer is **בְּכִנּוּר**, "with a harp." As is known, the harder you pull on the strings of a harp, the greater the sound that comes from it. So, too, the more a person suffers,

Benefits of Shame and Humiliation

It is a great level to accept shame and humiliation in silence, without answering back. Reb Yonason Eibshitz (אלות בכות, איכה ג' ל') says it is as if one brought a korban. This is alluded to in the pesukim (Tehillim 4:5-6) וְדָמוֹ יִדְּמוּ "...be utterly silent. Slaughter offerings..." Reb Yonason Eibshitz writes, "It is known that when someone embarrasses his fellow man, it is like he murdered him. The color leaves his face, and he turns white like the dead. When a person hears people humiliating him and doesn't respond, and he accepts it with love, it is like his blood is being poured for Hashem and brought on the mizbeiach, and he conquers his yetzer hara immensely. וְדָמוֹ יִדְּמוּ means that he is embarrassed and he accepts it with love and in silence. It is like his blood was put on the mizbeiach, as it states afterwards, וְזָבַח זֶבַח, 'Slaughter offerings...'"

The Navi (beginning of Shmuel 1) tells that Elkanah had two wives, Chanah and Peninah. "Peninah had children, but Chanah had no children" (Shmuel 1, 1:2). Peninah used to provoke and humiliate Chanah, as it states, (ibid. 1:6) וְכַעֲסָתָהּ צָרָתָהּ גַּם בַּעַם בַּעֲבוּר הַרְעָמָה כִּי סָגַר ה' בָּעֵד רַחֲמָה, "Her rival (tzarah, named Peninah) provoked her again and again to irritate her." Rashi writes that she would say to Chanah, "Did you buy a hat for your older son? Did you buy a shirt for your younger son?" Rashi also writes that her taunting was l'shem Shamayim. She wanted Chanah to be upset and daven for children.

The Navi tells us that Chanah davened for a child, and Hashem gave her Shmuel HaNavi. Chanah praised Hashem, she said (Shmuel 1, 2:1), עֲלָץ לִבִּי בַּה' רָמָה קִרְנִי בַּה', "My heart exults in Hashem. My pride has been raised

through Hashem." The Chasam Sofer (Drashos, Drush 22, vol.3 p.22a) teaches that Chanah merited a child because she accepted the shame she received in silence, and she didn't embarrass Peninah. The Chasam Sofer writes, "Chanah said that she was נְעֻלֶבֶת, embarrassed, וְלֹא נְעֻלֶבֶת, and she didn't embarrass others, and she wasn't upset about the tzaar she had in This World. Actually, she was happy with her yesurim. In this merit, she had her yeshuah." This is hinted at in the words עֲלָץ לִבִּי בַּה' which are roshei teivos for עֲלָב, shame. She was shamed, yet she didn't shame others, and therefore Hashem raised her mazal, and she merited to give birth to Shmuel.

When a person is embarrassed and humiliated by others, it is an opportune time for tefillah. If he can be silent and not respond, and he davens to Hashem, his tefillos will be answered. An indication of this is found in Malbim's commentary on the following pesukim. It states, (Tehillim 69:13-14) יִשְׁיחוּ בִּי יֹשְׁבֵי שַׁעַר וְנִגְיִנוֹת שׁוֹתֵי שֵׁכָר, וְאֲנִי תַפְלִיתִי לָךְ ה', "Those who sit in the gates talk about me and make up drinking-songs of drunkards. As for me, may my prayer to You, Hashem, be at an opportune time. O Hashem, in your abundant kindness, answer me with the truth of Your salvation."

The Malbim writes, "When people who sit at the gates speak about me, and they drink wine and they make *leitzonus* about me, at that time, וְאֲנִי תַפְלִיתִי לָךְ, I turn and pray to You. This is because when people laugh at me, it is an eis ratzon. At this time, אֱלֹקִים, Hashem answers my prayer, בְּרַב חֶסֶדְךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּאַמֶּת יִשְׁעֶךָ, Hashem answers my tefillos and grants me salvation."²

the more his neshamah shines, emanating a sweet sound and music. As such, the answer to my riddle is the harp.

2. We heard the following from a member of our chaburah who lives in New York. He had three sons, the youngest already eleven years old, and he very much wanted another child. We won't elaborate on the hardships he went through in the hopes of having another child, but despite all his hishtadlus, the doctors told him there was no hope for him ever to have children again.

The 15th of Av – The Days of Teshuvah Have Arrived

Tzaddikim say that from the fifteenth of Av, Heaven begins preparing the chairs for the judgment.

Many have the custom of wishing people a *kesivah vechasimah tovah* from the 15th of Av. The *gematria* of חמשה עשר באב is כתיבה וחתימה טובה.

It states (*Koheles* 12:1-2) וְזָכַר אֶת בּוֹרְאָיו... עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִחְשַׁךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְהַכּוֹכָבִים, "So, remember your Creator... before the sun, the light, the moon and the stars grow dark..." The Or HaMeir explains that תִּחְשַׁךְ has two words in it, תש כח, "weakened strength." תִּחְשַׁךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ implies when the sun begins to get weaker, and that is on the 15th of Av, as Chazal tell us that on the 15th of Av the days begin to become shorter and the sun becomes weaker. וְהַיָּרֵחַ means the month of Elul, as it states in parashas Ki Seitzei (21:13), וְבָכְתָה אֶת אֲבִיהָ וְאֶת אִמָּהּ, "She shall weep for her father and her mother for a full month..." and the *Zohar* states that this refers to Elul. Thus, the *pasuk* is urging people to remember Hashem and to do *teshuvah* before the fifteenth of Av and Elul arrive. They certainly shouldn't wait for

the last minute to do teshuvah; instead, they should begin the process of teshuvah now.

Feeling the Pain of Others

The Chazon Ish writes the following in a letter (*Igros* vol.1 123): "You have to develop the attribute of feeling the tzaar of others, and to join them in their distress. The counsel to attain these feelings is the hishtadlus you do to relieve someone from his tzaar. Your actions, which demonstrate caring, will influence the heart. You should also daven for others – even if right now, you don't really care. Even so, you should daven for others, and this approach will help you truly care for them. Do so, even if the person who has tzaar is a regular person, and even if he is a lowly person." This counsel is based on the principle אחר הפעולות נמשכות הלבבות, that the heart is affected by one's deeds. By doing deeds or saying tefillos that show concern for one's fellow man, he begins to become sensitive and caring for others.

One example of this principle is to collect money for the poor and needy. Chazal (*Bava Basra* 9) teach us, גְּדוֹלַת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה יוֹתֵר מִן הָעוֹשָׂה, "Causing others to give *tzedakah* is a greater mitzvah than giving *tzedakah* yourself."

Last summer, he went to a bakery erev Shabbos to buy challos for Shabbos. In this bakery, people put on gloves before they handle baked goods. For some reason, he didn't do so this time. When he put out his hand to take one of the challos, one of the customers in the store shouted at him in a loud voice, "Does everyone have to buy what you have already touched with your hands?" He was very embarrassed. He felt as though his blood was being shed like water. He was also upset that no one in the store spoke up in his defense. It seemed that they all agreed that he should be berated in such an embarrassing manner. He immediately turned his eyes to heaven and whispered a tefillah from the depths of his heart. He said, "Ribono Shel Olam, let this shame be a merit for my two sisters who are waiting so long for children." One of his sisters was married for four years; the other one, six and a half years. They both didn't have children.

Hashem heard his tefillah. Both his sisters bore a child. One child was born before Purim, the other before Pesach. He also had his yeshuah; despite the doctors' dire predictions, he had a son that year. Three children – three worlds – all in the *zechus* of remaining silent in the face of humiliation, and by turning the pain and suffering into a tefillah to Hashem.

Another story happened in the Catskills last year. A rav was saying a long *shalashudes* Torah, and one of the attendees ran out of patience and embarrassed the rav in public. "Why do you go on and on with divrei Torah that no one is interested in hearing..." The rav remained silent. Someone quickly approached the rav and told him that he is six years after his chasunah, and he doesn't have children. The rav blessed him with all his heart that he should bear a child. Then, the rav said to him, "Not one child. Two children. May you have twins." This year he had twins. Mazel Tov!

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk *zy'a* says, "Going around the four corners of the city to collect money for the poor atones for very grave sins that deserve the four deaths issued by *beis din*."

Reb Aharon of Belz *zy'a* said, "Going from door to door collecting money for the poor frees a person from *kares*." The shame one endures by performing this mitzvah atones and purifies.

The Aruch HaShulchan (247:5) writes, "I received a *kabbalah* that when one collects money for others, this protects his future generations that they will never need to collect money for themselves."

Reb Getzel Berger *z'l* from London (*niftar* תשל"ח/1977) was a wealthy Satmar chasid who gave large sums of money to *tzedakah*. The Satmar Rebbe *zy'a* once asked him to encourage other rich people to donate to *tzedakah* in addition to giving *tzedakah*.

Reb Getzel replied that he preferred to give more money for *tzedakah* than to solicit others, but the Rebbe insisted that he also ask other wealthy people for donations.

As we explained above, one of the benefits of collecting money for others is that you are training yourself to feel their pain.

There are other forms of *chesed* that one can be involved in. Someone asked the Chazon Ish *zt'l* why he spends so much time hearing people's problems and giving them counsel. Wouldn't it be better if he used this time studying Torah?

The Chazon Ish replied that if he had a lot of money, he would spend a lot of his time distributing the money to the poor. But he doesn't have a lot of money, so this is his way of helping others.

Kind to All

Rebbe Shlomo Bobover *zy'a* talked about his grandfather, the first Reb Shlomo of Bobov. He was the Rav in Vishnitza and founded the first yeshiva in Galicia. He

invested a lot of effort to ensure the success of the yeshiva, and for the growth of the bachurim in Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. He also carried the heavy burden of funding the yeshiva, which forced him sometimes to borrow money. All the silver utensils of his home and his Rebbetzin's jewelry were used as collateral.

The debts were constantly increasing, and the Rebbe had no choice other than to travel to other cities to collect money for the yeshiva. He traveled for several weeks, and wherever he went, many people came to him with *kvittelach* and gave him money. In exchange, he bestowed them with many *brachos* and salvations.

His attempts were successful. During one of these trips, he collected 1,200 gold coins. This was enough to cover all the debts, with money left over for the Rebbe's home, and for the yeshiva.

The Bobover Rebbe was a grandson of the Divrei Chaim of Sanz *zt'l*. (The Bobover Rebbe's father was a son of the Divrei Chaim.) An unkind, wealthy person went to the Rebbe's uncles (who were children of the Divrei Chaim), and relayed negative reports about the Bobover Rebbe *zt'l*, totally false accusations, and the Rebbe suffered immensely from these libels. When the Rebbe was returning from his successful fundraising trip, this man came to speak to him. The *gaba'im* didn't recognize who it was and allowed him to speak with the Rebbe. Had they known who he was, they wouldn't have permitted him.

The man told the Rebbe that he wasn't wealthy anymore. He lost all his money and was in great need of funds.

The Bobover Rebbe gave him all the money he raised on this trip.

When the man left, the Rebbe called for his *gabbai* and told him to go to a certain person and to borrow from him twenty *reinish* so that they could continue their trip. He explained that he doesn't have any money at all to pay for the rest of his trip. It

was all given to tzedakah, to help that person.

When the gabbai heard this, he thought he would faint. They were so happy with the outcome of the trip, and now they were returning empty-handed, with nothing at all. And who got the money? An opponent of the Rebbe!

Reb Yisrael Yitzchak was a close chassid of the Rebbe. He was the one who organized the entire trip. The gabbai went and told him what happened. Reb Yisrael Yitzchak was very upset. He broke out in tears, "How could the Rebbe do that? How could he give all the money to a person who has so much chutzpah, and who caused him so much distress?!" He avoided talking to the rebbe until he calmed down because he feared he might say something that wasn't proper.

The Rebbe sensed that Reb Yisrael Yitzchak was upset, so he sent a shaliach to call for him. The Rebbe opened a Chumash to parashas Kedoshim and showed him the pasuk (19:18), *לֹא תִקֶם וְלֹא תִטֹּר אֶת בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאֶהְיֶה לְרֹעֶךָ*, "בְּמוֹךְ אֲנִי ה'", "You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your fellow man as yourself." The Bobover Rebbe said, "Tell me, isn't this pasuk speaking about me?" If I had given the money to ploni or ploni (he mentioned the names of two of his outstanding chasidim, Reb Kalmile Klasner and Reb Michile Kalivarer, who were tzaddikim and Torah giants), you wouldn't be upset because they are from the greatest people of our *chaburah*. So, your distress isn't about the loss of money. It's just that I gave the money to a person who caused us *tzaar* with his discrediting words. I want you to know that my yetzer hara told me the same thing. Why should I give so much money to this man? But I remembered the Chazal לכוף לעדף, *את יצרו עדיף*, that there is a benefit in bending

and going against one's yetzer hara. I also realized that giving him the money will arouse Hashem's immense compassion on us."

The holy sefer Tomer Devorah (ch.1) writes, "מִי אֶל כְּמוֹךְ", means that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is a *מלך נעלב*, a King Who is shamed, yet He tolerates His disgrace... Hashem sees everything and nothing is concealed from Him... Even when a person sins against Hashem, Hashem bestows His kindness on him... Even as the person is committing an aveirah and angering Hakadosh Baruch... Hashem tolerates the disgrace, and He gives strength to the person's limbs..." He helps the person even at the time of the aveirah, to give him life and strength. "Don't say that Hashem can't stop giving him good, *chas v'shalom*, because Hashem can ... say, 'You are sinning against Me, so do it with your own strength.' ... But even at these times, Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't stop bestowing His kindness. He tolerates the shame, and still He bestows strength and goodness onto the person ... This is an attribute that a person must acquire and practice. It is the attribute of *savlanus*, tolerance. Even if he is *נעלב*, shamed, and even if someone sinned against him, nevertheless, he should continue performing kindness to this person."

Rebbe Shlomo Bobover zt'l learned this trait from Tomer Devorah. He said that all his *madreigos* were attained solely because he learned every day the holy words of the sefer Tomer Devorah. And that is how he became a Rebbe.

With this in mind, we understand how the Bobover Rebbe was able to do kindness even to a man who harmed him. As the Tomer Devorah teaches us, we must go in Hashem's ways, to do kindness even to those who go against us.³

3. The Alter of Kelm zy'a said that Tomer Devorah is the Shulchan Aruch for *middos tovos*.

The Shlah Hakadoesh writes, "Whoever is accustomed to studying this sefer, and he reads it every week, or every month, he is guaranteed to be a ben Olam Haba. *אשר לו טוב*, he is fortunate, and good will be his portion."

Reb Boruch Ber of Kamenitz zy'a (the Birchas Shmuel) was the *rosh yeshiva* in Kamenitz, and his daughter became a *kallah* to one of the best *bachurim* in the yeshiva. Reb Boruch Ber was very happy with the shidduch, and he gave gifts to the *chassan*, as customary. He gave him a hat, clothing, and a gold pocket-watch.

Reb Boruch Ber suggested to the *chassan* to learn in another city, so he can learn without interruption and disturbances (because Reb Boruch Ber's family lived in Kaminetz). The *chassan* agreed to this idea and went to learn in another city. Several months later, a package arrived at the home of Reb Boruch Ber. In it were the hat, clothes, and the gold watch, which Reb Boruch Ber had given to the *chassan* as gifts. The letter that came along with the package said that he was reneging on the shidduch. It only stated those words. He didn't share why he was breaking the engagement; there was no explanation as to why he changed his mind.

Reb Boruch Ber was shocked. He wasn't expecting this at all. He knew his daughter would be very hurt; however, he had no choice but to tell her.

Some time passed, and Reb Boruch Ber received a letter from this bachur. Reb Boruch Ber opened the letter, hoping to finally understand what occurred, but the letter wasn't an explanation. Instead, the bachur was asking Reb Boruch Ber to write a letter of recommendation for him.

This is because a small town wanted to hire this bachur to be their Rav. When the vaad of the city interviewed the bachur, he told them that he had learned in Kaminetz. The people of the community were very impressed by this young prodigy. Still, before accepting him to be the Rav, they wanted a letter of recommendation from the

Rosh yeshiva, Reb Boruch Ber. "Therefore," the bachur completed the letter, "I request that the *Rosh yeshiva* write me a letter of endorsement."

Reb Boruch Ber's heart broke once again. All the *tzaar* the *bachur* caused him resurfaced. He was also upset with the bachur's chutzpah, to ask him for such a letter, after what he did to him and his family.

But Reb Boruch Ber knew that it was a test that he must pass. He wrote a very positive letter. Before sending it, he showed the letter to three bachurim. He told them, "The pain is still fresh in my heart. I'm worried that my personal feelings might result in me writing something I shouldn't. Therefore, I want you to read the letter and to tell me whether this letter properly portrays the qualities of this bachur. If you think that it doesn't sound right, I will write another letter because I want to give him the best letter."

Halevai, we should even have a drop of these high levels. This story is another example of doing kindness, even to those who harmed us.

תורי זה from the Magid of Zalitz zy'a writes, "I heard (in the path of mussar) quoted from Rebbe Yitzchak of Dravitz zt'l that... it is the way of people, that if someone insulted them or harmed them, they hold onto their anger and complaints to this person until erev Yom Kippur, and then they make up and appease one another. However, this isn't the path of the Torah. One must forgive everyone each night before he goes to sleep. Also, in the morning, he must forgive everyone who might have harmed him at night.

This is alluded to in the pesukim (Bamidbar 28:3-4), וְאָמַרְתָּ לָהֶם זֶה הָאֱשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרְבוּ לָהּ כְּבָשִׁים בְּנֵי

The Divrei Yoel of Satmar zy'a said in the name of the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz, zy'a, that learning this sefer is a proven segulah for protection against the renowned disease. Also, the Yismach Yisrael zy'a would tell people ill with the dreaded disease to study this holy sefer.

שָׁנָה תְּמִימִים שְׁנִים לְיוֹם עֲלֵה תְּמִיד, אֶת הַכָּפֶשׁ אֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה בְּבֹקֶר וְאֶת הַכָּפֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים, as follows:

זֶה הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרִיבוּ לָהּ, this will make a nachas ruach to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. כְּבָשִׁים, the matters that you generally keep tied up in your hearts the entire year, you shouldn't do so. Rather, שְׁנִים לְיוֹם, twice every day you should forgive those who harmed you. אֶת הַכָּפֶשׁ אֶחָד, the hard feelings that you have in your heart, תַּעֲשֶׂה, you shall fix it⁴, בְּבֹקֶר, each morning. When one awakens, he should remove the anger from his heart. וְאֶת הַכָּפֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי, the second issue that is being held in your heart, תַּעֲשֶׂה, you should fix it, בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים, before going to sleep."

The Gemara (Yoma 9b) says that the second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*. Therefore, the wise should take heart, to increase *ahavas chinam*, to love every person of Yisrael, and to do kindness to them. This is even if they wronged you. The concept is that a person shouldn't see only himself. He must remember that there are others in the world, other than him.⁵

Shabbos Nachamu

Sefer Minhag Tov (first printed in 1929/תרפ"ט from an old manuscript by an Italian *gadol*) writes, "One shouldn't take a haircut before erev Shabbos

Nachamu, and when erev Shabbos Nachamu arrives, one must take a haircut, and one must be happy, and to welcome Shabbos with joy and a good heart, and he will be consoled with many consolations, and Hashem will console us with the redemption of Yerushalayim."

Similarly, the Mahari'l states that on Shabbos Nachamu יִשְׂמְחוּ כָּל הָעָם וְיִבְטְחוּ בְּנִחְמָת הַגּוֹאֵל, "The entire nation shall be happy, and trust in the solaces of the redemption."

On the Mishnah (*Taanis* 26:) that states, לֹא הָיוּ יָמִים טוֹבִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר בָּאב, "There weren't yomim tovim for Yisrael like the 15th of Av", the Ritvah writes, וּמִפְּנֵי זֶה נִהְגוּ עֲשׂוֹת סְעוּדָה בַּשַּׁבָּת, "Therefore, there is a minhag to have a special meal on Shabbos after Tisha b'Av."

בן שוועיב, student of the Rashba, writes, מִצְוָה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ כּוּיּוֹם טוֹב, it's a mitzvah to celebrate it like a yom tov.⁶

Davening for Moshiach

The Chidushei HaRim zt'l told the following mashal:

A king became angry with his son for his wayward behavior, and he banished him from the palace. The king sent him to live

4. See Devarim (21:12), where it states וַעֲשֵׂתָהּ אֶת צִפְרִינָהּ, and this means to fix the nails.

5. The Ahavas Yisrael of Viznitz zy'a was once in a town for Shabbos, and everyone was surprised when, throughout the Shabbos, he bestowed a lot of honor on a very simple person, who was like "a nobody" in this city.

The Ahavas Yisrael explained, "The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*. This means that the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt when there is *ahavas chinam*, love for no reason. This is the reason I chose to love and to honor this simple person. Anyway, he deserves this honor because he is a descendant of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. (Heard from the Chernobyler Rebbe Shlita).

6. People call the month of Av Menachem Av. The Chasam Sofer (*Masei*) quotes the Yerushalmi that these are actually two months: Av and Menachem. Until Tisha b'Av, it is Av, after Tisha b'Av, it is Menachem. Several times, in the Chasam Sofer's *teshuvos*, he refers to Av as "the month Menachem".

It states (Yeshayah 66:23) וְהָיָה מִדֵּי חֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹדֶשׁוֹ, which implies that there's a month that begins in the middle of the month. The Chasam Sofer says that this refers to Menachem, which begins in the middle of Av. The *pasuk* continues, וּמִיָּדִי שָׁבַת בְּשַׁבְּתוֹ, this refers to Shabbos Nachamu. The *pasuk* concludes, יָבוֹא כָּל בָּשָׂר לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לִפְנֵי אֲמֹרֵי ה', The Chasam Sofer explains, we will be redeemed from galus at this time of year, and we will bow down before Hashem, in the Beis HaMikdash.

among beggars. The prince lived among the beggars for a long time. He almost forgot about his past, the days when he lived a life of royalty.

One day, the king reminded himself of his son's plight and took pity on him. So, he sent a messenger to his son to ask him what he needed and what the king could send him. The king's son said, "My bag for begging is worn out. Tell my father that I need a new bag."

The nimshal is that we are in galus for so long, we forgot our prestige. Sometimes, our tefillos are about receiving a new bag for begging, or some other small matter. We forget how distant we are from where we should be.

The Chasam Sofer zt'l told a mashal about a child whose parents were niftar, and the house he lived in was taken away, and now he had to live outdoors. Once, a wise man saw the boy crying hysterically in the middle of the street because he had lost one of his toys. The wise man commented, "The child's lot is so bitter. He lost his parents, his home, a roof over his head, and even worse, he lost his mind. He doesn't realize the bitterness of his lot. He thinks his only problem is that he lost a toy." The same is with Bnei Yisrael in galus. We lost our Parent, our home, the roof over our heads, and we cry over small matters. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is our Father in heaven, and we became distant from Him. Our house is the Beis HaMikdash, and it was destroyed. We were sent into galus, and yet we cry over foolish matters, the games we lack. This means we also lost our sanity because we don't realize the bitterness of our situation.

On the other hand, there is a *limud zechus* for klal Yisrael. Although we "totally lost

our minds", the yeshivos and the kollelim are full. People desire to study Torah, to daven well, to experience the joy of Shabbos. What greater *limud zechus* is there than this!

Nevertheless, we should remember what we lost, and daven for a speedy salvation.

There is a halachah (Devarim 24:15) בְּיוֹמוֹ תִּתֶּן שְׂכָרוֹ, "On that day, you shall pay his wages." And it states (Vayikra 19:13) לֹא תִלֵּין פְּעֻלַּת שֹׂכֵיר אִתְּךָ, "A worker's wage should not remain with you overnight until morning." These pesukim teach us that a person must pay his workers on time. Nevertheless, there are situations where the obligation doesn't apply. The Gemara (Bava Metzia 111a) and Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 339:10) tell us, אִין בַּעַל הַבֵּית עוֹבֵר מְשֻׁם בִּלְ תִלֵּין אֶלָּא אִם בֵּן תִּבְעֻו הַשְּׂכִיר; לֹא תִלֵּין, "The transgression of postponing payment, is solely if the worker asked you for his wages. If the worker doesn't ask for the money... you don't transgress the aveirah."

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l repeated this halachah to encourage us to daven for Moshiach. He explained that if we ask for Moshiach, this will be likened to when a worker asks for his wages, and the employer must pay him on that same day.⁷ If we ask, there will be immediate results.

It often occurs that a chasunah doesn't begin on time. Many things can cause delays. Sometimes, the *chassan* is already standing under the chuppah, and it will still take some time until the chasunah begins because they have to wait for the *kallah*. But the moment the *kallah* arrives, the chasunah immediately begins. It is a disgrace to push off the chuppah when everything is already in place and everything is ready. The Chofetz Chaim zt'l teaches that keviyachol, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the *chassan* and the Jewish

7. There is a primary difference between a person who hires workers and l'havdil, our relationship with Hashem. When a person hires workers, he is happy if his workers don't come forward to request their pay. However, Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires that we should ask Him for the redemption. He feels the tzaar of Bnei Yisrael in galus, and he awaits our tefillos for the redemption. When we daven for Moshiach, it will occur speedily in our days.

nation is the *kallah*. Many years have passed, and the *geulah* hasn't arrived yet. Nevertheless, if we go under the chuppah, the redemption will occur immediately. Because when the *kallah* arrives, there is no more reason to delay.

If we shout out to Hashem that He save us from this galus, it shows that the *kallah* is ready, and she has come to the chuppah. And then, Hashem will redeem us immediately.

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l once said to Reb Binyamin HaTzaddik, the Magid of Radin, "Oy, Reb Binyamin, what will be? The galus is so long!"

Reb Binyamin replied with a mashal: A group of people were traveling from Petersburg to Odessa on a sled, pulled by powerful horses. It was a long trip; it would take several days. The passengers became cold in the freezing winter night, so they drank some vodka. The vodka made them tired, and they fell asleep. When they awoke, it was already the next night. The Russian winter days are very short, and they thought it was still the same night as when they fell asleep.

They were cold once again, so they drank some more and fell asleep again. When they awoke, it was the following night. They asked the wagon driver, "What is going on? The night is so long!"

The wagon driver told them, "You're sleeping, that's why you think it's a long night."

The nimshal is that there are times that Hashem wants to save us and to take us out of galus, but we are sleeping, and we don't take advantage of the opportunities. We don't ask for Moshiach, and we don't prepare ourselves for the redemption. This is alluded to in the pasuk (Yeshayah 21:11-12) שִׁמְרָה מִהַ מְלִילָה אֶמַר שִׁמְרָה אֶתָּא בִּקְרָ וְגַם לַיְלָה אִם תִּבְעִיּוֹן בְּעִיּוֹ שִׁמְרָה מִהַ מְלִילָה. אֶמַר שִׁמְרָה אֶתָּא בִּקְרָ וְגַם לַיְלָה אִם תִּבְעִיּוֹן בְּעִיּוֹ, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" The watchman said, 'Morning is coming, but

also night. If you really desire it, repent and come."

We ask the שִׁמְרָה, who is Hashem, מִהַ מְלִילָה, how long is this galus! How long will we suffer? אֶמַר שִׁמְרָה אֶתָּא בִּקְרָ וְגַם לַיְלָה, Hashem replies that the day has already come. In fact, the opportunity for the *geulah* had come several times, only you slept through it and missed the opportunity. אִם תִּבְעִיּוֹן בְּעִיּוֹ, Rashi says that this refers to tefillah. The pasuk is saying that if you will daven for the *geulah*, שִׁבּוֹ אֶתִּי, and if you do teshuvah, the *geulah* will come.

When Reb Naftali Amsterdam zt'l came to live in Yerushalayim (from chutz l'aretz), he came to Reb Shmuel Salant zt'l. He said, "Everyone is obligated to have a Rav, as it states (Avos 1:6) עֲשֵׂה לָךְ רַב. Please, tell me who should be my Rav here in Yerushalayim?" (Reb Naftali Amsterdam was already very old; he was a great tzaddik, and in the past, he had served as the rav in several cities. Nevertheless, he still felt that he needed a rav.)

Reb Shmuel Salant told him, "The gaon, Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, gives a shiur in Mishnayos every day between Minchah and Maariv. Go there and listen to his shiur. When you hear something new from him, he will be your Rav."

The next day, all the people who attended Reb Yosef Chaim's daily shiur were shocked to see the old tzaddik, Reb Naftali Amsterdam, come to listen to the shiur. The shiur was a simple shiur, intended for *baalabatim*, simple people. They learned Mishnayos. Why would Reb Naftali join the shiur?

Actually, Reb Naftali enjoyed the shiurim. Although they were simple shiurim that anyone could understand, Reb Naftali understood the depths of Reb Yosef Chaim's shiurim. With clarity and simplicity, Reb Yosef Chaim explained the Mishnayos in a manner that answered many difficult questions. Nevertheless, Reb Naftali didn't hear anything that he didn't already know, and he was waiting for the moment when Reb Yosef Chaim would become his Rav.

One of the chapters of Mishnayos Sanhedrin is called חלק (because it begins with the renowned phrase, (בְּלִישְׁרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא), and Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld was teaching the Rambam's introduction to this perek. In this introduction, the Rambam teaches the 13 אנִי מאמִין. Reb Yosef Chaim elaborated on the 12th Ani Maamin, the belief in the coming of Moshiach. He repeated the Gemara (Sanhedrin 97a) that Moshiach will come בהִסָּח הדעת, when people aren't thinking about it, and aren't expecting it.

At this point, Reb Naftali spoke up for the first time. He asked, "How can one forget that Moshiach is coming? One of the questions that will be asked of each person when they come to heaven is צִפִּית לִישׁוּעָה, 'Did you wait for the salvation?' (Shabbos 31a). Also, in every tefillah, we affirm כִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוִינֵנו כָּל הַיּוֹם, 'We await the coming of Moshiach all day long'. In Kedushah, we say in a loud voice, ותִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ כִּי מַחֲבִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ, 'Be our king, because we are waiting for You.' So, is there a Yid who has הִסָּח הדעת from Moshiach?!"

Reb Yosef Chaim replied, "Imagine that right now, the door opens and someone comes in and says, 'Rabbosai! Why are you all sitting here? Moshiach has arrived!' Everyone will be in shock, and they will ask, 'Is it true? Could it be?' Now I ask you, is there a greater הִסָּח הדעת than that? When

people wait for a guest, and then they hear that the guest has arrived, no one would wonder or question whether it is true. They will get up and greet him. So, why should it be surprising for us to hear that Moshiach came? This is הִסָּח הדעת."

Reb Naftali's face lit up with joy, and he stood up and said, "It is true! It is true! I have a rav. I learned something new."

Four Tips for Your Tefillos to be Answered

The *parashah* begins, וַאֲתַחֲנֶן אֵל ה' בַּעַת הַהִיא, לאמר, "I prayed to Hashem at that time, saying..." Moshe davened with all his heart to have the merit to come into Eretz Yisrael. The Or HaChaim HaKadosh teaches that Moshe Rabbeinu was careful to daven in the best manner, so he would have increased hope that his tefillos would be answered. He used four techniques for his tefillah, and they are alluded to in this pasuk:

1) To daven with humility. One shouldn't ask from Hashem as if he deserves it, and that Hashem must answer him. Rather, one should request with humility, understanding that Hashem doesn't owe him anything. This is alluded to in the word וַאֲתַחֲנֶן, which means pleading, as it states (*Mishlei* 18) תַּחֲנוּנִים יְדַבֵּר רֶשַׁע, "The poor plead." This is how Moshe davened, like a poor person, requesting a מתנת חנם, an undeserved gift from Hashem.⁸

8. Before *Shemonah Esrei* in the morning, we say עוֹזֵר דָּלִים, "Hashem helps the poor." The Arizal says that one should imagine that he is poor and helpless, and daven with that mindset.

The Pele Yoetz (*Kniyah*) writes that there was once a group of tzaddikim who were davening with lots of *kavanah*, and it was revealed to them from heaven that although their tefillos were wonderful, they deserved punishment since they didn't have humility. However, there was one person in the group who davened with humility, and in his merit, everyone was saved.

Once, a woman asked the Chofetz Chaim zt'l to daven for her son who was very ill. The Chofetz Chaim came to the beis medresh and said, "Ribono Shel Olam, over the years, You did so much kindness with me. You helped me write the *sefarim* *Mishnah Berurah*, *Shemiras HaLashon*, and other *sefarim*. It is not because I was deserving that You helped me. It was due to Your unlimited kindness. Please do me one more favor and answer my tefillos and heal this boy."

Take note that the Chofetz Chaim didn't say, "In the merit that I wrote all these *sefarim*, answer my tefillos. He prayed with humility, with the recognition that everything he has is because of Hashem's kindness.

A student of the Chazon Ish zt'l once said to his Rebbe, "*Es kumt mir a mazal tov* – I deserve a mazal tov.

2) The next condition for tefillah is hinted in the words, אל ה'. The Or HaChaim writes, שבקש ממקור הרחמים, to plead from the source of compassion.⁹

3) בעת ההיא teaches us to daven when there is an *eis ratzon*, auspicious times for tefillah. Some times are more *mesugal* for tefillah than others, and we should strive to daven at those times.¹⁰

4) לאמר means that when one davens, one should express himself clearly. He shouldn't speak in vague, ambiguous terms, leaving room for doubt in the meaning of his words.¹¹

We shouldn't say, "Hashem knows what I mean." Instead, speak clearly and say precisely what you want to say.

I just had a child."

The Chazon Ish rebuked him, because no one can say "*es kumt mir*", that he deserves Hashem's kindness. Hashem doesn't owe anyone anything.

A childless woman was complaining to Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l* about her bitter life. Reb Shlomo Zalman explained to her that she can't have complaints because Hashem doesn't owe her anything. However, if she will do for Hashem more than she is required to do, Hashem will do for her more than she deserves, and she will merit children.

She heeded his advice and became a volunteer in Shaarei Tzedek hospital in Yerushalayim.

A year later, she had a daughter.

9. Tzaddikim say: When one davens, one must believe that (1) Hashem can help. (2) He wants to help. (3) And my tefillos make a difference. One of the conditions is to believe that Hashem is compassionate and wants to fulfill our requests.

10. The Gemara says, "When is it an *eis ratzon*? It is when the *tzibur* davens."

Reb Pinchas Koritzer *zt'l* says that for an hour, each day, the אור הגנוי (concealed light) shines, and whoever prays at that time, his tefillos will be answered. Since we don't know when the *or haganuz* shines, it is good to pray several times during the day. Maybe he will pray at the time when the concealed light shines, when it is an *eis ratzon* for tefillos to be answered.

11. There was a couple in Yerushalayim who had only one daughter. They wanted more children, and they would daven, "Fill our house with children." With those somewhat ambiguous words, they prayed for more children.

Their one and only daughter merited to have many children. Unfortunately, she was divorced, and she and her children moved into her parents' home.

The parents' tefillos were answered. Their home was now "filled with children," but that wasn't what they meant. It is essential to be specific and express oneself clearly while davening.

The Or HaChaim quotes the following Midrash (*Esther Rabba* 7:24):

A traveler was exhausted after walking a long distance. He raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Ribono Shel Olam! Send me a donkey!" This was an ambiguous tefillah because he didn't specify why he wanted a donkey.

He walked on and met a high-ranking official. The official was standing next to a donkey and its new offspring. The official couldn't travel on with the newborn, so he commanded the Yid to carry the baby donkey to his home.

As the Yid walked, with the donkey on his shoulders, he said, "This happened to me because I davened for a donkey, but I didn't express myself clearly. I failed to ask for a donkey *to ride on*. My prayers were answered; I received a donkey. But instead of riding on it, I must carry it."

Reb Moshe Midner *zt'l* asked: Why is expressing oneself coherently and clearly in tefillah so important? Hashem knows what we need, even if we don't express ourselves!

Reb Moshe Midner answers that one must know that he is speaking with Hashem. If he has this *emunah*, he will express himself very well. He will speak to Hashem like a child speaking with his father. The problem with not being articulate with the tefillah is that it shows that he doesn't really recognize that he is speaking to Hashem.

Reb Moshe Midner *zt'l* taught this lesson to his friend, Reb Hershel Mikrinki *hy'd*. Reb Moshe Midner concluded, "Whenever you need salvation, say two chapters of *Tehillim* and then express your needs before Hashem *yisbarach* in your own words. Express yourself well. Don't hint, don't be ambiguous, don't be stingy with your words. And then Hashem will answer your tefillos. And I request that when you do this, mention my name, too: Moshe ben Rachel, so I too will benefit from this" (*Sod Siach Chassidim*).

It states in this week's *parashah* (4:7), **כִּי מִי גוֹי**, גדול אשר לו אלקים קרובים אליו כה' אלקינו בכל קראנו אליו, "Which great nation has a god close to them as Hashem our G-d is close to us whenever we call out to Him."

The *Yerushalmi* explains that to the human eye, it appears that *avodah zarah* is close to its worshippers because the *avodah zarah* and their owners reside in the same home. They are very close. It also seems to us that Hashem is very far away because we don't see Him. But the opposite is true. As the *Yerushalmi* writes:

"No one is closer [than Hashem and the Jewish nation]. Hashem seems to be far away because the distance from the earth to heaven is [vast]... Yet, when a Yid comes to the *beis hakneses* and stands behind the *amud* and davens silently, Hakadosh Baruch Hu listens to his *tefillos*. Is there anything closer? Hashem listens to him as though he is whispering into Hashem's ear."

When we have this *emunah*, we will express ourselves well.

Another counsel for tefillos to be answered is to daven with *kavanah*. As it states, **וְאִתְּחַן** אל ה' בעת ההיא לאמר and the *roshei teivos* of **בַּעַת** ההיא לאמר spell **הַלֵּל**, the heart, indicating that Moshe davened with all his heart and soul (*Chida, Nachal Kedumim, Ve'eschanan* 1).¹²

The Baal HaTurim writes that the *gematriya* of **וְאִתְּחַן** is **שִׁירָה**. He explains that Moshe said **שִׁירָה**, songs of praises to Hashem so that Hashem would listen to his tefillos.

We do the same as we begin our tefillos with *pesukei d'zimra* and praises, and that helps our tefillos to be answered.

The Imrei Shaul of Modzitz *zt'l* explains that praising Hashem implies that he is confident that Hashem will help him. So, he sings and praises Hashem even before salvation comes. That trust is *mesugal* for his tefillos to be answered. As it states (*Tehillim* 106:44), **וַיִּרָא**, Hashem checks to see whether **בָּצַר** להם, when people are going through hard times, **בְּשִׁמְעוּ אֶת רִנָּתָם**, they are already praising Hashem and thanking Him for the salvation that they know will come.¹³

12. Even when we don't have *kavanah*, we should continue davening. A hint to this concept is in the *piyut* (Hoshana Raba), **שׁוֹפְכִים לֶךְ שִׁירָה בְּלֹא לֵב וּלֵב**, "They pour out their words, without a heart and with a heart." We can explain that this refers to people who, although they don't have a heart when they daven, they *want* to daven with *kavanah*. Their desire to daven properly should be enough for **הוֹשַׁע נָא**, that Hashem should answer their tefillos.

13. A man living in the south of Eretz Yisrael was having a hard time marrying off his children. His oldest child was twenty-eight, and he had another four children above the age of twenty.

He also had financial difficulties as he had taken a mortgage on his house to help his *chavrusah* marry off

his children. His *chavrusah* was supposed to pay the monthly fees, but he was unable to, and his house was in foreclosure.

One evening, this man was in Yerushalayim for a *chasunah*, and he met a relative. He told his relative about his struggles to marry off his children and his financial problems.

The relative replied, "There's a great tzaddik in Yerushalayim – the Beis Yisrael of Gur. Tell him your problems. He will certainly help you."

This man wasn't a chassid, but his relative convinced him to go, and he poured his bitter heart out before the Rebbe. The Beis Yisrael asked him, "Do you ever praise Hashem? Praise should be 60% and requests should be 40%."

This man told his relative the counsel he received. The relative said, "You have a lot to thank Hashem for. You have health, a wife, and children. You always have food on your table... Focus on the good. Get into the practice of praising Hashem as the Rebbe suggested: 60% praises and 40% prayers."

Two months later, his oldest daughter was engaged. Within a half year, three of his children were married, and two more were engaged.

Around that time, his *chavrusah's* mother was *niftarah*, leaving a large inheritance. The *chavrusah* immediately paid up the debt, and this man was able to redeem his house from the bank.

This man then realized that the Rebbe's counsel of 60% praises and 40% requests can be found in *Hallel*. When we say Hallel, we repeat *הודו לה' כי טוב* six times, while *אנא ה'* is said four times. This is precisely as the Beis Yisrael advised: 60% praises and 40% requests. This ratio brings *yeshuos*.

How does one focus on the good? Let's see how Reb Zalman Brizel *zt'l* (one of the tzaddikim of Yerushalayim) did it.

One day, he said to his son, Reb Nota, "Don't ask! I had such a hard day today!"

"What happened?"

"I woke up in the morning [at two a.m., as was his daily routine] and I wanted to put on my shoes, but they were without shoelaces. I understood that the grandchildren played with them and hid them somewhere."

"What did you do?" the son asked.

"Don't ask. I looked all over the house for the shoelaces until I found one of them. I thanked Hashem for that, but I still couldn't go anywhere with just one shoelace. I searched the house for the other one, which isn't an easy feat for an old man like me. I finally found the other one, and I went to the *mikveh*. But when I came out of the water, my clothes weren't there. Someone took them! I considered asking Reb Kalman [a Rav who would often help Reb Zalman] to bring me another set of clothes from the house, but then I decided against it, because your mother wouldn't remain silent if she heard that someone stole my clothes."

"So what did you do?"

"What did I do? I'll tell you what I did. I woke up this morning and found the shoelaces in my shoes. I went to the *mikveh*, and no one stole my clothes. Everything was fine and well, Baruch Hashem!"