

בעזרת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

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Rosenbaum shlita**

Vayeitzei

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Vayeitzei

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וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיֵּלֶךְ שָׁם כִּי בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשֶׂם מִרְאשְׁתּוֹ
וְגו' (כת, י-יא)

And he came to the place and he rested there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and placed them at his head... (28:10-11)

**Yaakov Avinu Davened
by the Makom
Hamikdosh:**

Rashi states: "Our Rabbanim interpreted it (the word 'vayifgah') as an expression of prayer, as in (Yirmiyahu 7:16):

‘And do not entreat (*tifgah*) me.’

This teaches us that Yaakov instituted Tefillas Maariv.”

Targum Yonason adds that Yaakov davened in the place of the Mikdash.

Tefillah Brings One Close to Hashem:

My grandfather, Rav Mordechele of Nadvorne *zy"á* (Sefer Maamar Mordechai) explains that prayer is the main form of “the service of the heart.” This is seen from the *pasuk* (Devarim 11:13): “To serve Him with all of your hearts”, which Chazal (Tainis 2A) explain to be referring to *tefillah*.

The explanation of this is that the heart is the seat of understanding. Through it, one can connect to Hashem and draw close to Him. The word “*tefillah*” also connotes creating a connection, as is seen from the verse that says that Naftali was given his name by Rochel because (Bereishis 30:8): ‘*Natfuli Elokim niftalti*. Hashem has joined me to my sister.’ This

teaches us that through *tefillah*, one can connect to Hashem and become close to Him.

Thus, the explanation of our *pasuk* is as follows: “*Vayifgah*”, and he arrived. When the word “arrive” is used, Chazal say that it always refers to *tefillah* (Brachos 26:2). “*Bamakom*”, in the place. The word ‘*Makom*’ is reference to Hashem, who is known as “*Hamakom*”, the Omnipresent. Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that when one prays, he can connect to Hashem.

Praying Not to Become Materialistic:

Sefer Kisvei RaMam quotes the Rebbe of Kobrin *zy"á*, who explains this *pasuk* as follows:

“And Yaakov went up from Be’er Sheva.” The word

“Yaakov” is reference to the *neshama*. “Be’er Sheva” is a word used to indicate a promise (as it is related to the word “*shavuah*”, promise). This means that the *pasuk* is hinting to the fact that before a *neshama* is sent down to this world it is made to promise to be a *tzadik* and not to be a *rasha* (as is stated in Niddah 30B).

“And he went to Charan.” This is a reference to the fact that when the *neshama* does come down to this world, it, unfortunately, becomes stuck in the materialism of this life and is sullied by Olam Hazeh. The solution for this is: “And he arrived at the place.” As we said,

this is a reference to *tefillah*. If one davens to Hashem to save him from getting stuck in materialism and worldly pleasures, he will be successful in avoiding this trap.

“And he lodged there.” This teaches us that one cannot daven flippantly, without concentration and devotion. He needs to be “lodged” in his *tefillos*, in the sense that he must pay attention to what he is saying and concentrate on the words.

“And he took from the stones of the place.” One also must ask for guidance and help from the *tzadikim* of his generation, who are the strong “rocks” of Klal Yisroel.

וַיַּחְלֶם וַיְהִי סֵלָם מִצֵּב אֶרֶץ וַרְאֹשׁוּ מֵאֵיץ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְגו' (כח, יב)

And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to Heaven... (28:12)

Emunah Sweetens The Pain:

Sefer Tiferes Shmuel states that this *pasuk* alludes to a great lesson.

The Mishnah (Brachos 9:5) says: “A person is obligated to make a blessing on the bad just like he is obligated to make a blessing on the good.” The Tiferes Shmuel explains that **it is an obligation upon every Jew to believe with complete faith that nothing big or small ever occurs that is not ordained by Hashem.**

Hashem is the One who rules and guides the entire world and He is the only power that has the ability to do anything. And everything He does is good. Since He is the source of everything, and everything He does to us is for our benefit, it

is obvious that even when it appears that we are being judged strictly and treated harshly, everything that is happening is actually for our own good. When one has such a level of *emunah*, all judgments from Hashem will be sweet for him. He will realize that strict judgements are actually Divine kindnesses.

We are currently in the midst of a long and bitter *golus*. We are faced with many troubles and difficulties every day. Our only solution is to have strong *emunah* in Hashem and trust that everything that happens comes from Him and is meant for our benefit.

This is what Hashem showed Yaakov in his dream: He saw a ladder standing on the ground. This was a representation of *golus* and all the pain and

suffering Klal Yisroel would go through when they would be down on the ground and stuck in the mud. Still and all, the top of the ladder reached to the Heavens. This represented the fact that *emunah* can sweeten the suffering, allow us to realize that it is all Hashem's kindness, and raise us up to great heights.

The *pasuk* then says that "behold" angels of Hashem were going up and down the ladder. The word "*hinei*", behold, always indicates joy (as in Shemos 4:14). This teaches us that we should accept our difficulties with joy and realize that they are for our ultimate benefit. This is why we are meant to bless the "bad" as much as we bless the good.

The Gemara in Brachos (60B) adds that we should "accept it with joy". This is learned from

the *malachim* who were going down the ladder, but even as they went downwards, they were as happy as they were when they went up because they knew that this was the will of Hashem.

The Importance of Money:

Sefer Od Yosef Chai relates a lesson that is hinted at in this *pasuk*:

The Gemara (Eruvin 86A) says that Rav Yehuda Hanasi would give honor to wealthy men. The Chida *zt"l* (Pesach Einayim) quotes the Arizal (Sefer Halikutim, Parshas Vayeitzei) as explaining that the reason he honored rich people is because wealth is a gift from Hashem

that He sends to specific

individuals. If Hashem chooses a person to become wealthy, that man becomes a vessel to receive Hashem's kindness and goodness on a constant basis. Therefore, Rebbi would give honor to the rich because they have the merit of being a vessel to constantly accept Hashem's influence.

Since money is a gift sent from Hashem, one should place value on the money Hashem gives him. He should treat it with a measure of respect and should not waste it on frivolous things. This is the reason why Yaakov Avinu went back to retrieve small jars that he had left behind (Chulin 91B). Since Hashem gave them to him, he treated them with respect and would not allow them to be discarded.

There is even more reason to give honor to wealthy people if they use the money Hashem

gave them for the right things. Someone who wastes his money on fancy houses and cars is not the type of wealthy person that is meant to be honored. But if someone uses his money to give a lot of *tzedakah*, he is deserving of honor!

Hashem gave him this gift of money. It descended to him from a holy place. If he uses it properly, he creates holiness on this world that ascends on high, which causes more good influences to be sent back down to this world.

This is hinted at in our *pasuk*. The *gematriah* of "*sulam*", ladder, is the same as the numerical value of "*mamon*", money. Although the ladder is sitting on the ground – meaning that the money is an earthly, material thing – its head is in the Heavens – meaning that it

creates holiness above. This is why *tzadikim* are careful with their money and treat it with respect. They know it has a holy source and can be used for holiness.

The verse then says a second reason why money is important. “Angels of Hashem were going up and down.” This indicates that sparks of holiness and holy *neshamos* that can take the form of a plant, animal or person, go up and down between this world and the next through the mitzvah of *zedakah*. The holiness is sent up when the wealthy give *zedakah* and holy *neshamos* come down to this world to benefit mankind.

Tefillah for Yiras Shomayim and Parnassah:

On this topic, we can add the words of Rav Bunim of Peshischa *zy”a* (cited in Sefer Medrash Simcha). He says that if someone only davens for *yiras shomayim*, and not for *parnassah*, it is a sign that even his prayers for *yiras shomayim* were not uttered with devotion and pure intentions.

This is because it is impossible to have one and not the other. **In order to have *yiras shomayim*, one needs to have sufficient *parnassah*.**

Speaking With the King:

The Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Parshas Va’eschonon) quotes the Baal Shem Tov *zy”a* as saying an explanation on the *pasuk* (Tehillim 102:1): ‘A prayer to a poor man when he wraps himself and pours out his

speech before Hashem.” He asks why it says “a prayer to a poor man (*l’ani*), rather than “a prayer from a poor man” (*m’ani*), and answers with the following moshol::

There once was a kind and powerful king who proclaimed that anyone who needed anything could come to him and present their request. Some people asked for gold or silver, while others asked for a position of authority, etc. One wise man made a different request. He asked to be allowed in to speak to the king three times every day. This made the king very happy because he saw how much this person loved him and how he valued spending time with him more than anything else in the world. Therefore, he said that his request would be granted and that he would be allowed in three

times each day, and whenever he came he could take whatever treasures he wanted from the palace..

Accordingly, he explains that Dovid Hamelech refers to Hashem as “the poor one” because He doesn’t hold anything in His hands and he gives everything over angels whom he appoints to take care of all of the world’s treasures. Dovid asks Hashem for permission to “wrap himself” with Him, meaning to be able to connect with Him by “pouring out his speech” to Him three times every day, knowing that if this request is granted, he will be able to take whatever he needs from Hashem’s treasures.

Hearing Every Prayer:

Sefer Hachasidim (Siman 18)

describes just how much Hashem desires and enjoys our prayers, even if they are imperfect, by saying: “If one recites Pesukei D’Zimrah in a loud and pleasant voice, even if he doesn’t know the meaning of the words and makes mistakes in pronunciation, his prayers are accepted like a pleasant fragrance, and Hashem rejoices with each word...”

Hashem is the Healer:

One who knows the power of *tefillah*, will turn to Hashem in prayer whenever he faces any challenge. He won’t place his faith in any patron or doctor. Rather, he will rely solely on Hashem and will ask Him for whatever he needs, as he will know that Hashem is merciful and compassionate and He helps all those who daven to Him.

Sefer Sipurei Tzadikim relates the story of a certain *chasid* who was very sick. He went to many doctors but they were unable to help him. Finally, he went to see Rav Mordechai of Neshchizy”a to ask for his blessing. The Rebbe told him, “My advice to you is to go see the professor who lives in the city of Anipoli. He will provide you with your cure.”

The sick man wasted no time in setting off on the journey to Anipoli. There were no trains yet at that time, so he hired a wagon to take him on the long trip. After many days, he reached Anipoli and asked around where he could find the professor. Whoever he asked looked at him strangely and said that no professor lived in there city. He then asked, “Perhaps there is a doctor here?”

Again, he was told that there was no doctor in the city and no medical expert.

The man couldn't understand it. Why would the Rebbe of Neshchiz send him on a wild goose chase? He was very upset that he had wasted so much time. He went right back to Neshchiz and told the Rebbe that there was no professor or doctor in Anipoli.

The Rebbe asked him, "If that's true, what do the people there do when they get sick?"

The sick man replied, "What should they do? Since they have no other choice, they place their trust in Hashem to help them."

The Rebbe then said, "That is the professor of Anipoli that I was referring to. **You must rely on the same professor that the residents of that city rely on**

when they get sick. You must put your trust in Hashem."

Immediately after the man left the Rebbe and began trusting in Hashem, he started to feel better, and he eventually was fully cured.

A Tefillah to Return to the Path:

A man who was clearly non-religious once came to see Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"za. Everyone wondered why this man, who clearly did not follow the ways of the Torah, wanted to see the Rebbe.

When the man entered the Rebbe's room, he broke down in tears and related that his enemies had libeled him to the authorities and had hired false witnesses to testify against him. He had no

way of defending himself and was facing a severe punishment.

Rav Meir asked him, “Are you Shomer Shabbos?”

The man said that he was not. He claimed that most of his business was on Shabbos because the non-Jews of his town received their paychecks on Saturday and would then go to buy whatever they needed. If he closed his store on Shabbos, they would go elsewhere and he would have no *parnassah*.

Rav Meir then asked him if he observed the laws of *kashrus*. Again, he said that he did not. He claimed that he and his wife were very busy people and they didn’t have time to concern themselves with getting kosher food.

Rav Meir then asked if he put on *tefillin* and davened. The man

again said that he had no time for such things.

The Rebbe grabbed his lapels and said, “I promise you that you will be found innocent if you commit to daven Shacharis and wear *tefillin* every day from now on!”

The man said, “How can I make such a promise? How will I find time to do this?”

Rav Meir told him, “I will give you a pair of *tefillin* and you only have to wear them for a few minutes a day. If you do this, I promise that you will be found innocent!”

When the man heard that it would only take a few minutes each day, he agreed. Rav Meir gave him a *talis* and a pair of *tefillin* and blessed him.

A short time later, the man

appeared in Rav Meir's bais medrash but his appearance had drastically changed. It was obvious that he had made some major changes in his life. He now kept all of the mitzvos and davened with devotion. He asked Rav Meir to help him do *teshuva* for his past sins and he became a close *chasid* of his.

Some *chasidim* who remembered what he used to look like asked him what caused this huge change and he replied, "What can I tell you? The Rebbe's *bracha* was fulfilled and I was found not guilty. I also fulfilled my part of the deal and I began putting on *tefillin* and davening for a few minutes each day. After a while, my conscience started to bother me. I realized that I probably should daven properly to thank Hashem for saving me from my time of

danger.

"I then began to daven slowly and with *kavannah*. I started to daven three times a day, and one mitzvah led to another. I realized that it was wrong to daven to Hashem every day while I still was *mechalel* Shabbos, so I started keeping Shabbos. Eventually, I also started keeping *kashrus* and doing all other mitzvos."

The Nusach is Not the Main Thing:

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen relates that when the Bais Avrohom of Slonim zy"ta established his bais medrash in Yerushalaim, his elder *chasidim* asked which Nusach they should daven in the new bais medrash – the Nusach of Teveriah or the Nusach of Baranovitch (there

were some differences between the two). The Rebbe answered, **“You could even daven Nusach Ashkenaz. The main thing is to daven properly!”**

Davening for One’s Friend:

The Gemara (Gittin 7A) says: “If one has a complaint against his friend and remains silent, Hashem will perform judgment on his behalf.”

The Noam Elimelech (Likutei Shoshana) explains that one must always daven for his friend. This is because one cannot do so much to himself, as “an incarcerated person cannot free himself from prison (Brachos 5B).” However, one can always daven for his friend. Therefore, everyone should daven for others, and this will allow

everyone to receive their salvation.

This is the meaning of the statement: “*Kol Yisroel arievim zeh lazeh.*” The word “*areivim*” indicates something sweet because every Jew can sweeten the judgments against his fellow Jews by taking responsibility for them and davening on their behalf.

The Noam Elimelech continues to say that the main *tefillah* is with one’s thoughts, and prayers done in the mind cannot be obstructed by damaging forces. Accordingly, the Gemara is saying that if one sees that his friend has complaints and is in need of help and he is silent, meaning that he davens for him with his thoughts, Hashem will “perform judgment on his behalf”, meaning that He will answer the prayer.

Davening for Others:

The Chazon Ish *zt"l* writes in a letter to a certain individual (Igros Chazon Ish, Chelek 1, 123): “You are lacking in feeling the pain of others. The solution for this is to daven for others, even if the prayers are not coming from the heart, and even if the one you are praying for is a coarse and degraded person.”

Tefillah for the Geulah:

A merchant once asked the Magid of Zlotchov *zy"ra* why he was so poor. Couldn't he daven for Hashem to make him rich?

The Magid answered with a *moshol* of a king who invited many guests to his daughter's wedding. The tables were bedecked with much finery and full of delicious food and drink.

Everyone was waiting for the bride to walk to the chuppah but they suddenly heard the alarming news that she had thrown herself off the fifth floor balcony and died.

All of the guests were heartbroken to hear this sad news, and the day of rejoicing turned into a day of mourning. However, there was one selfish man who didn't want to miss out on the opportunity for a good meal. He sat back down at the table and kept eating. Of course, everyone thought this man was insane.

The Magid explained: The Shechinah is in *golus* and the Jewish people are suffering every day. How could I ask Hashem for money? It is better to daven for the *geulah* and for the Shechinah to return to its place.

Davening Like a Pauper:

The *pasuk* states (Tehillim 109:4) that Dovid Hamelech said, “I am *tefillah*.”

Sefer M’Zekeinim Esbonen quotes the Rebbe of Kobrin *zy”a* as explaining that usually when a person wants to make a request of someone else, he sits down with a pen and paper and writes a letter, detailing what he needs. However, when a poor man dressed in torn rags needs help, he doesn’t need to write a letter. Everyone can see what he needs.

Thus, Dovid was saying, “I am *tefillah*! Hashem, just look at me and You can see what I need.”

Considering Oneself Dead Before Davening:

Rav Aharon of Kobrin *zy”a* (quoted in Bais Aharon, Seder

Hayom) would say that before a *tzadik* would daven, he would imagine that he was dead and was suffering in the grave, and someone had come and said, “Get up and *daven*!”

He said that his own father, Rav Asher of Stolin *zy”a*, told him that he davened like this for a full year. (Sefer Tiferes Banim – Munkatch, Parshas Lech Lecha – writes that this idea can be used to explain the verse in Bereishis 17:11: “*Hishalech lifanei v’heyey tamim*. Walk before Me and be complete.” The Gemara says in Sotah 12A that the word “*halicha*” - to walk - always indicates death, as is seen from numerous sources. Thus, Hashem told Avrohom to imagine that he was already dead and lying in the grave and then to “be *tamim*”, meaning to get up and daven with complete

enthusiasm and devotion.”)

Rav Aharon added that one should also imagine that he is already in the World of Truth and he is being judged for everything he did during his lifetime. All of his sins are shown to him and he is facing a difficult verdict. At this dire time, an angel comes to him and says that he can return to earth and daven to Hashem one more time and to beg Him to save his soul. This one *tefillah* can rectify all of the aveiros he committed throughout his life.

Obviously, he would daven like he never davened before. He would cry out to Hashem from the depths of his heart and beg for compassion.

This is how *tzadikim* daven every day. They look at each *tefillah* as if it is their last chance

to save themselves and to obtain Hashem's mercy. It is related that the Rebbe of Strelisk zy"ra would daven this way. Every day before davening, he would take leave of his family, as he feared that he might use up all of his energy on the *tefillah* and his soul would leave his body.

Never Give Up:

My ancestor, Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Kretchnifer zy"ra (Sefer Toras Chaim V'emunah) explains this *pasuk* by quoting the Gemara (Brachos 32B) that states: "Four things need strengthening: Torah, good deeds, *tefillah* and *derech eretz*... If one sees that he is praying and not being answered, he should pray again, as is stated (Tehillim 27:14): 'Hope to Hashem. Strengthen and fortify your heart and hope

to Hashem.” Rashi explains: “Hope and strengthen yourself and do not stop. Rather, hope again.”

This does not only apply to *tefillah*. The same is true for every aspect of *avodas Hashem*. If one sees that he is not being successful in properly serving Him, he should strengthen his heart and try again. In His infinite kindness, Hashem allows us to always start again and to keep trying until we are able to break through all barriers and serve Him properly.

This is hinted to from the words “and he took from the stones of the place.” If one feels like a stone is covering his heart and obstructing him from serving Hashem, he should not despair. Rather, he should strengthen his resolve and “put it by his head”, meaning that he should try again

to get it right.

Part of this involves looking back at one’s past actions and determining what is obstructing one’s *avodas Hashem* from being effective. Once one rectifies the blemish of the past, the stone will melt away and will no longer obstruct his heart.

Ascending Above:

The Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 68:12) says that the angels were dancing on the ladder. The Chidushei Harim zy”a writes that we can learn from this that a Yid’s actions in this world can have such a tremendous effect even in the Upper Worlds, to the extent that even the Heavenly angels dance with joy when the Jewish people engage in good deeds and *avodas Hashem*.

5 Kislev – Yahrzeit of the Rav Shmuel Eliezer Halevi ben Rav Yehoshua

The Maharsha Zy"l

Bread for the Hungry:

Sefer Toldos Maharsha relates that a local baker once came to the Maharsha's bais medrash in order to daven with the *tzibur*. The Maharsha saw that the baker looked upset, so he called him over and asked why he appeared so sad.

The baker said, "Rebbi, I prepared many loaves of bread this week to sell on market day but I was only able to sell a small amount of what I baked. Now, I am left with a lot of bread and no buyers".

The Maharsha couldn't stand seeing the man so sad, so he told him, "Bring all of the bread to my house".

When the loaves of bread were brought to his house, he paid for it all and distributed the bread to the poor.

The Rov Who Became a Wagon Driver:

The same *sefer* relates that when the Maharsha served as Rov of a certain *kehillah*, he would spend most of the day sitting and learning with the *bnei hayeshiva* of the city. At the time, there was a "Chief Rabbi" of the entire region, and all the Rabbanim of the surrounding area were under his authority. All the Rabbanim of the local communities in the region were required to come before the Chief Rabbi to pay homage to

him, but the Maharsha did not come to him because he was sitting and learning at all times.

The Chief Rabbi understood that the Maharsha was so busy learning that he couldn't come to him, so he decided to travel to the Maharsha's city to meet him there. When he arrived in the city, all of the residents hurried to greet him, as was customary, but the Maharsha did not go. The Chief Rabbi understood that he was immersed in his learning and didn't want to waste a moment. He decided that he would personally go to the bais medrash where he was sitting with his students, but even when he got there, the Maharsha did not greet him. He continued learning, without even looking up to give him "*shalom*". Still and all, the Chief Rabbi judged him favorably and said that the

Maharsha does not want to stop learning for even a second.

Suddenly, a young bochur entered the room and the Maharsha greeted him warmly. He rose to his full stature, welcomed him with much honor, and spoke to him at great length. The Chief Rabbi now became furious. He yelled at the Maharsha, "At first, when you did not come to see me in my place, I judged you favorably and said you must be too busy learning. Later, when I came to your city and you did not come to me, I again judged you nicely and said that you didn't want to waste time from learning. After that, when I came to the bais medrash and you did not greet me, I once again judged you favorably and thought you didn't want to lose a moment of Torah study. But now I see that it is a

lie because you stopped learning to honor this young man and talked to him quite a bit in the middle of learning!”

The Maharsha said to him, “I will give you a sign that I acted correctly... You will see that this young man will be killed within two hours.”

The Chief Rabbi didn’t believe him. He took the same bochur and walked with him here and there for the next two hours, engaging him in conversation, so that he wouldn’t leave his sight and he would be able to disprove the Maharsha’s words.

As they were walking through the city, a nobleman passed by and shot an arrow in an attempt to shoot a bird. He missed and the arrow hit the young man in the heart... and he died exactly two hours after the Maharsha

uttered his statement.

The Chief Rabbi ran back to the Maharsha, who said to him, “Now you will see that in a short time, another man will be killed.”

While they were talking, they heard a commotion coming from the street, with people saying that they had found a man who had been killed. By now, the Chief Rabbi was very frightened and he asked what was going on.

The Maharsha then revealed to him, “This young man was the reincarnation of Achav, King of Yisroel. That is why I gave him great honor. And because Achav was killed, this bochur was also destined to be killed. As soon as the young man was born, a damaging angel was created in order to kill him, and it was stationed next to the city, waiting

for the time to kill him. But because you delayed him until he was killed in the middle of the city by the man shooting arrows, the angel of destruction had to be given another man in his place. Thus, you caused that man's death, and you must do *teshuva* for this."

Upon hearing this, the Chief Rabbi fell at the feet of the Maharsha and begged him to forgive him, and to give him a way to do *teshuva*. The Maharsha said to him, "Your *teshuva* will be that you leave the Rabbanus and become a wagon driver."

He accepted this upon himself and became a wagon driver.

Talmudo B'Yado:

The same sefer relates that the Maharsha learned Torah day and

night. Since he loved Torah so much, he did not want to doze off for a moment, and he would stay up all night learning.

The only night that he did not learn was on the night of "Nittel". On this night, he would make a reckoning of all of his finances so that he would know how much to give to maaser.

One year, there was a sinful person who lived in the city of Ostroha who disliked the Maharsha. This man went to the authorities and made up a libel against the Maharsha, falsely claiming that he had cursed the Christian religion. As proof, he related that the Maharsha would not learn Torah on the night of Nittel because he believed that this night was impure.

The Maharsha, who was unaware of any of this, sat down

that Nittel night and started to make his financial calculations. Suddenly, while he was writing, a sefer fell off his bookshelf and landed on the floor. The Maharsha quickly picked it up, kissed it and put it back in its place. However, another sefer then fell from the shelf and landed on the ground.

The Maharsha again bent down to pick it up, but the same thing then happened a third time. The Maharsha realized that this was not a coincidence. He opened the sefer and looked into it, as if he were studying it, and, at that exact moment, the door was forced open and a group of policemen rushed in, with the informer at their lead.

When they saw the Maharsha learning from a sefer, they turned around and left, and the informers plan went to naught.

Tehillim Annulled the Decree:

An amazing story is told that one early morning, the Maharsha was walking to shul when he saw a strange cloud in the sky. He immediately ordered his attendant to quickly open the bais knesses for him, and to then announce throughout the streets of the city that every Jew - men, women, and children, and even those sick in bed – should gather immediately in the shul, and the doors to their houses should be left wide open without fear.

The *shamash* did as he was told, and he made the announcement in all the streets of the city. This created a mass panic and everyone hurried to gather in the bais knesses. The Maharsha commanded that everyone should recite Tehillim. He himself stood leaning on his

walking stick behind the door, reciting Tehillim with tears in his eyes and in a broken and subdued voice.

After a short time, hundreds of armed gentiles came and attacked the Jewish neighborhood, but they were very surprised to see that there was no one there. When they approached the shul, they heard voices and sought to enter the bais knesses to riot against the Jews, but they found that they could not enter through either the doors or the windows. Therefore, they decided to burn down the shul, together with all those inside it, but they were unsuccessful, and all the arrows they shot at the shul immediately melted like wax.

The leader of the mob realized that the Jews must have amongst them a righteous man whose

prayers were being accepted. He knocked on the door and said, “You don’t need to be afraid. Open the door and I will not do you any harm.”

The Maharsha then said that everyone could stop saying Tehillim, as the decree has passed and it had been annulled. He told his *shamash* that he could open the door.

The leader of the mob walked over to the Maharsha, kissed his hand and said, “I see that your prayers are valued in Heaven. I promise you that there will be no more riots here. I only want to ask you one thing. What deeds did you do that made your prayers so effective?”

The Maharsha answered, “We didn’t do anything. We just said Tehillim and prayed from the depths of our hearts. And a

prayer from the depths of a broken heart is accepted by our Father in Heaven.”

This event created a tremendous Kiddush Hashem.

May the memory of the tzadik be a source of blessing for Klal Yisroel.



בס"ד

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