

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Mishpatim





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Mishpatim

Emunah

Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zt'l* earned his *parnassah* from his salt store. One day, someone opened another salt store, right across the street from Rebbe Dovid's store. Rebbe Dovid wasn't worried about that because he knew he would get the amount pre-destined for him on Rosh Hashanah. Once, customers were waiting outside the competitor's store to buy salt, but the owner of that store was home. So, Rebbe Dovid quickly ran to the storeowner's home and said, "You have customers waiting outside your store to buy salt."

Reb Zalman Brizel *zt'l* established a bakery (called *באפיית ברזל*), located on Meah Shearim St. One of his employees learned the tricks of the trade and

opened his own bakery. Reb Zalman wasn't angry. He even offered him advice on how to improve his business.

Reb Zalman's family could not understand why Reb Zalman was being so cordial to his competition. They said, "We understand that you didn't want to make a *machlokes* and take him to *beis din* for taking away your *parnassah*, but why do you help him?"

Reb Zalman replied, "My *parnassah* was pre-determined on Rosh Hashanah, and he isn't taking anything away from me. He is saving me time and work because he is taking some of my customers while, simultaneously, I'm not losing money. So, if he helps me, shouldn't I have *hakaras hatov* and help him, too?"

When someone gives *tzedakah*, he thinks he helped the poor. In reality, that money belongs to the poor man. Only, it was given to the wealthy man so that he can give it over to the pauper. As the Sefer Chassidim (חט"ו) writes, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives wealth to someone... and paupers complain to Hashem [that this wealthy person isn't helping them] The wealthy person will be punished as if he stole from many paupers..." In a way, he indeed stole the paupers' money, because Hashem gave him the paupers' portion, and since he kept it for himself, it is like theft.

The Skulener Rebbe (author of *Noam Eliezer*) zt'l compared it to people seated around a table at a *chasunah*, and a tray of meat is placed before one person. Certainly, the entire meat is not intended for that one person. He is supposed to take some and share the rest with the others around the table.

Similarly, when Hashem gives one person a lot of money, Hashem wants him to oversee distributing it. It is not meant to be all for him.

The Chida (in his commentary on *Sefer Chassidim*) writes that the letters before *כסף* are *עני*, indicating that Hashem first thought of the *עני*, and to help him, He gives *כסף* to the rich.

Another explanation: *עני* comes before *כסף*, hinting that if you help the poor, the result will be that Hashem will grant you even more money.

The *Amud HaAvodah*, (*Bitachon* 9-13, written by Reb Boruch Kosov zt'l) writes, "*בללא דמלתא*", from when the world was created until today, no one ever lost a dime (*prutah*) and no one ever gained a dime. Although to human eyes, it can seem as if one has lost money, it is impossible to lose money in truth. As Chazal (*Beitzah* 16.) tell us, *כל מוונותיו של אדם קצובין לו מר"ה עד יום*

הכפורים, 'A person's *parnassah* is set and pre-determined from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur.' [This means the amount he will get this year is fixed, and it is impossible to change it.] If it were possible for a person to have more money than what was decreed on Rosh Hashanah, why do Chazal say his *parnassah* is קצובין, set and pre-determined?

"Also, if everyone in the world will try, with all their strength, to cause someone to lose money... they will fail. Because if they can cause him to lose money, why do Chazal say that the *parnassah* is קצובין, set and determined from Rosh Hashanah? Everyone says that they believe in the oral Torah. So why don't they believe in the word קצובין that is written in the Gemara...?

"The Rema MiPano *zt'l* (*Esarah Maamaros, Chikur HaDin*, 4:9) writes that all mitzvos of the Torah are written in the future tense. For example, it states (*Vayikra*

3:17), כל הלב וכל דם לא תאכלו, 'All fats and all blood, you *will not eat*.' Hakadosh Baruch Hu is guaranteeing us that we won't commit *aveiros*. But how can we explain the *pesukim* ... לא תגנוב ... לא תגנוב. These *pesukim*, written in the future tense, are saying, 'You will not steal.' However, we know that people do steal!

"The explanation is: When Reuven takes a thousand *zuz* from Shimon, it appears to the human eye that Reuven gained and that Shimon lost, but it is not so. If Reuven had not taken the money in a forbidden manner, he would have earned the thousand *zuz* through permitted ways. But now that he stole a thousand *zuz* from Shimon, Hashem will give the thousand *zuz* that was destined for him to Shimon to replenish Shimon's loss. This means that when Reuven stole a thousand *zuz* from Shimon, he didn't take Shimon's money at all. Reuven took

away his own money. The Torah writes לא תגנוב לא תגזול, in the future tense, 'You will not steal' ever. The thief perceives his theft as gained money, but he just took the portion that would have come to him regardless, in proper ways. And the one who lost money due to the theft didn't lose money at all, because Hashem will repay him from somewhere else..."

The *Amud HaAvodah* adds, "If people believed in all of this, they wouldn't need to go to *beis din* [to get their money back] because they would know that it is impossible to lose or to gain, and only the amount that was pre-determined and decided from Above will be. [So why does the Torah permit going to *beis din*?] It is because the *yetzer hara* blinds and tricks people into thinking that someone harmed them..."

Chazal (ibid. *Beitzah* 16.) say, כל מזונותיו של אדם קצובין לו מ"ה, "Every

עד יום הכפורים חוץ מהוצאת שבת ומהוצאות יום טוב והוצאת בניו לתלמוד תורה, "A person's *parnassah* is pre-set and pre-determined from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur. The exceptions are the expenses that one pays...for his children to study Torah." The *Amud HaAvodah* explains that a *melamed* should teach Torah for free. As Moshe Rabbeinu said (*Nedarim* 37.), מה אני בחנם אף, אתם נמי בחנם, "Just as I taught you Torah for free, so shall you teach Torah for free..." But people aren't on this level, and they want to get paid for teaching Torah. Therefore, the money that was destined to go the *melamed* now goes to the parents, and they in turn hand the money over to the *melamed*. The *Amud HaAvodah* writes, "The parents and the *melamed* both err. The parents think they are losing the money when they pay the *melamed*, and the *melamed* thinks he is making money. But actually, the money they

are giving to the *melamed* always belonged to him."

והאלקים אנה לידו, "**Hashem brought it to his Hands.**"

(21:13)

The Pasuk states (21:19), ורפא ירפא, "[The one who hit his fellow man] must pay the medical fees." The Gemara (*Bava Kama* 85.) מכאן שנחנה רשות לרופא, "We learn from this pasuk that doctors are permitted to heal." Rashi explains, ולא אמרינן רחמנא מהי ואיהו, מסי, "We don't say, 'Hashem hit him, and a doctor should heal him.'" After all, the person was wounded by Hashem's decree. How can a doctor go against Hashem's will and heal him? The Torah tells us, ורפא ירפא, that doctors are permitted to cure the ill.

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* notes that the ill person that the Torah is referring to is someone who was struck by his fellow man. The incident happened through flesh and blood,

not directly from Hashem. Yet, the Gemara says that we would say רחמנא מהי ואיהו, מסי, "Hashem smote him, and the doctor should heal." Why? This is to teach that everything is from Hashem. And even when incidents occur through people, it is also from Hashem.

When someone loses one of your items, you are upset. But we mustn't forget that Hashem planned the loss, so there is no reason to be angry.

Devarim Achadim (p.11) writes that this lesson is alluded to in this week's parashah (22:8), על כל אבידה אשר, יאמר כי הוא זה עד אלקים יבא. The *pasuk* can be read like this:

על, כל אבידה, when something gets lost, אשר יאמר, כי הוא, *he* lost it. Or they say, זה, *this* person is responsible for losing it. עד האלקים יבא דבר שניהם, recognize that it was not הוא or זה, it wasn't שניהם, neither of them. Attribute what happened to Hashem. עד

האלקים יבא דבר שניהם, instead of blaming others, recognize that it was *bashert*.

This week's *parashah* also discusses accidental murder, *r'l*. Who is guilty? Can one be angry with the person who accidentally killed one's relative? Naturally, the relatives will be very angry, and therefore, the Torah gives the relatives permission to kill the murderer, if they find him outside of *ערי מקלט*.

However, if we want to be truthful about what happened, the Torah tells us (21:13), ואשר לא צדה והאלקים אנה, "If he didn't [kill him by] ambushing him, rather [it happened by accident, because] Hashem caused it to come to his hands, I will give you a place [*arei miklat*] where he can escape." The Torah reveals that also the accidental murder was arranged by Hashem (see Rashi).

The keywords are, אלקים לידו, "Hashem brought it

to his hands." The accidental murder happened by Hashem's decree.

We can explain the *pasuk* (21:13) as follows, אלקים לידו, אנה לידו, when one believes that everything happens from Hashem, ושמתו לך מקום, אשר תנוס שמה, you will escape from your troubles. The awareness that everything is from Hashem causes the person to perceive all happenings *L'tovah* - for the good.

Trust in Hashem

Reb Shimshon Pinkus *zt'l* discusses how parents take care of their infant children diligently, often giving them what they need even before the children ask. But this attitude gradually changes, and as the children mature, the parents don't run to take care of every detail.

What changed?

Reb Shimshon Pinkus explains that when children feel totally dependent on

their parents, parents feel totally devoted to their children. But when the children feel that they can fend for themselves, parents feel less obligated to care for their needs.

Reb Shimshon Pinkus adds that it is the same regarding our devotion to Hashem. If we feel totally in need of Hashem's help, Hashem's *hashgachah pratis* over us is felt in a very intense way. But when we think we can manage on

our own, the *hashgachah pratis* over us lessens.

In *Tehillim* (131:2) Dovid HaMelech says, אִם לֹא שׁוֹיֵתִי וְדוֹמַמְתִּי כְּגִמּוּל עַל־אִמּוֹ כְּגִמּוּל עַל־נַפְשִׁי "I swear that I imagined myself like a suckling child who was fed by his mother..." This is how we should imagine ourselves, totally dependent on Hashem. And when we acquire that perception, Hashem will be devoted to helping us.¹

1. The Divrei Eliyahu (*Tehillim*) relates that people asked the Vilna Gaon *zt'l* to describe how it appears when a person has *bitachon*. The Vilna Gaon replied, "Dovid HaMelech, himself, described it for us. (*Tehillim* 131:2) אִם לֹא שׁוֹיֵתִי וְדוֹמַמְתִּי כְּגִמּוּל עַל־אִמּוֹ כְּגִמּוּל עַל־נַפְשִׁי "I swear that I imagined myself like a suckling child who was fed by his mother..." When a child nurses until he is satisfied, he isn't worried about whether there will be milk for him to nurse the next time he will be hungry. Dovid said the same, 'I am not worried about tomorrow. I trust fully in Hashem.'"

There used to be a custom to hang an ostrich egg in a *beis kneses*. The *Shach al HaTorah* (תּוֹרַת דִּי'ה וְאִם) explains that this was to remind people to place their trust in Hashem alone. An ostrich lays its eggs in a high spot, and incubates the eggs by gazing at them from the distance. (The heat of the ostrich's eyesight warms the eggs.) Should an animal step between the ostrich and the egg, the ostrich will kill the intruder, because it is preventing the ostrich from incubating the egg.

It states in this week's *parashah* (22:21-22), כל אלמנה ויתום לא תענון אם ענה תענה אותו כי אם יצעק אלי שמוע אשמע צעקתו, "Don't afflict a widow or an orphan. If you will, and he will shout to Me, I will hear his shouts..." The Rabbeinu b'Chaya explains, "When people are embarrassed or aggrieved, they go to those who can help them. But the orphan and the widow are weak; no one helps them, so they trust in Hashem, alone... Therefore, the *pasuk* says, they are helped more than anyone else."

As the Ramban (*ibid*) writes, "[Hashem says] 'I save everyone from those who are stronger than them. Also, the widow and orphan, I listen to their shouts. They don't trust in themselves, and therefore they trust in Me.'"

Rebbe Yechezkel of Kozmir *zt'l* taught:

Animals give birth easily and painlessly, while humans experience labor pains. This is because humans trust in their doctor or midwife. But an animal doesn't have anyone helping it give birth; the animal places its trust only in Hashem, and when one does so, everything becomes easier.

A month ago, an extraordinary woman, a Holocaust survivor, was *niftarah* at the age of ninety-two. I heard her story of salvation from her son, who is a *tzaddik* and *chassid*, a close friend of mine:

This woman and her older sister were born in Germany before World War II. When cruel decrees

An ostrich egg was placed in a *beis knesses* to remind people that they must be focused on Hashem, alone. They shouldn't lose focus or allow anything to intercept their focus and concentration on their father in heaven.

against Yidden became commonplace in fascist Germany, the parents took their two daughters and escaped to France.

But their troubles followed them to France, and they were detained in a concentration camp. The father was permitted to leave each morning to go to work. The mother and the two daughters remained behind in the camp, where they suffered fear, starvation, and humiliation.

This woman (who was recently *niftarah*) would often talk about how she went through the camps and the horrors of the Holocaust without worry. She trusted that her parents were taking care of her in the best way, and that they always knew what needed to be done. Therefore, she was never worried.

Once, she broke her leg and needed to go to the hospital. Her mother brought her two daughters to the front gate, and in a

broken French, she managed to tell the guard that they required a hospital.

The guard replied, "You and your young daughter can go, but there is no reason to take along your older daughter. She has to remain here."

Using a drop of French and hand movements, her mother explained to the guard that she could hardly speak French, and she needs her older daughter to help her communicate with the doctors. The guard accepted the excuse and let them out.

The doctors at the hospital said that it was a very severe wound and needed to operate. They stayed overnight, and in the morning, the doctors told them that the operation wasn't successful. She would remain a cripple all her life. The operation probably just made matters worse.

The mother picked up her daughter and headed back to the concentration camp.

As they approached the camp, they were shocked by the silence. Even more surprising, there was no guard at the front gate. The camp was almost entirely deserted. They heard from the few people who remained that there was a deportation a day before, and everyone was sent to Auschwitz.

This family was saved because they weren't in the camp when the round-up took place. The father was saved because he was at work.

They immigrated to Eretz Yisroel, and the woman who was just *niftarah* received a monthly check from the Germans to compensate for the horrors she endured during the Holocaust. She could have received more money to pay for her becoming a cripple, but she refused to

take money for her wounded foot. She said, "This foot is mine, and I won't sell it to the *resha'im*. This foot saved our lives."

We learn from this story that even when something terrible happens, trust that it is for our benefit. Additionally, we can learn from this story how to trust in Hashem. As a girl in the camps, she wasn't worried because she knew her parents were caring for her. If we have this same trust in Hashem, we will also have nothing to worry about.

Adar

If we keep our eyes open, we will see many miracles that Hashem performs for us. We won't see open miracles, similar to the splitting of the sea, the Torah being given on Har Sinai, etc. But concealed within the rules of nature, we will notice many miracles of *hashgachah pratis*. Our job is to keep

our eyes open and recognize them.

The ideal time to work on acquiring this awareness is during the month of Adar, as the Meor Einayim teaches, א' דר אדר stands for א' דר, the Alef dwells. The Alef is Hashem, the אלוהו של עולם, and in Adar we can discover that Hashem dwells in this world and leads it with *hashgachah pratis*.

The Bnei Yissaschar (Kislev 4:83) quotes a *mashal* from early scholars, which describes the uniqueness of the Purim miracle:

Someone fell ill, and the doctors said to the family, "There is a cure, and if we administer it to the patient, he will certainly recover. The problem is that we can't give it to him."

The doctors explained, "You see, the remedy is rare, costly herbs that grow on the islands off the Indian coast. But because they are so precious, the Indian

government doesn't export the herbs to sell in other lands. They want it for the ill of their own country. Furthermore, these days, no merchant or tourist travels the long distance from India to here. So, although there is a cure, we can't give it to your relative."

The family replied, "We will hire someone to travel to India, to bring back the herbs."

"That is very compassionate and devoted on your behalf, but you have to realize that it is a dangerous trip. You have to pass through dangerous deserts and stormy seas. Many people who traveled this route didn't survive. Furthermore, the trip is long; it can take years, and your relative only has a day or two to live. By the time your messenger returns with the herbs, your relative will long be in the next world."

"I'll tell you more," the doctors told them. "Even if we had the herbs right here, we don't know how to prepare them. The herbs need to be mixed, cooked, and prepared in a specific way, and no one in this country knows how to do that. There's a wise doctor who lives far away (in the other direction) in Spain. He knows how to prepare the medicine. But to send someone to Spain to bring the doctor here is also a long trip that will take years. Additionally, it isn't certain that the doctor will survive the trip because it is also a risky route. As your relative doesn't have much more time to live, there's absolutely no hope."

The family prepared themselves for the inevitable. They ordered shrouds, bought a plot in the cemetery, etc. They lost hope.

Suddenly, while making their preparations for the imminent death, they heard that a ship from the Indian

coast had just docked and that it was carrying the herbs this ill person needed.

They hadn't gotten over the shock when they suddenly heard the next wonder: Someone came into the room and announced that the great doctor of Spain had just arrived.

The doctor from Spain was called to the ill patient's room. He prepared the herbs, and the sick person recovered.

In this story, nothing supernatural occurred. Everything could be explained according to the rules of nature. However, it is evident that a miracle happened. Everything transpired at the exact moment that was needed. Everyone understood that Hashem arranged this to heal the sick man. Only a fool would think that it happened randomly.

The miracle of Purim is similar, as all the

happenings during that time could have been understood according to natural occurrences. Still, when one takes in the entire episode, he sees, without doubt, that Hashem performed the miracle. (The Bnei Yissaschar adds that the Purim miracle was a thousandfold more incredible wonder than the story we stated above. As he writes it, *אלפי אלפים ורבות רבבות פעמים ביתר שאת לאין (משער.)*)

The Bnei Yissaschar explains, "Although every aspect of the Purim miracle was natural, nevertheless, when one thinks of all the details that brought about the miracle...and everything happened just at the right time, any rational thinking person will admit that this was performed by Hashem's *hashgachah pratis* to save Bnei Yisroel. Therefore, although this miracle was clothed within the rules of nature, it has a similarity to the miracles of yore that were beyond nature,

because everyone can recognize from the Purim miracle that it was performed from Hashem..."

The Bnei Yissaschar explains that this Purim miracle was a middle stage, between the revealed miracles of the past and the miracles dressed in nature that continue until today. Before the Purim miracle occurred, miracles beyond and above nature would occur to Bnei Yisroel. After the Purim miracle, until today, miracles clothed within nature occur, but they are obscured in nature one might not recognize Hashem's hand. The Purim miracle was in between because it was within the bounds of nature, but it was also obvious that Hashem performed the miracle.

This miracle is celebrated in *chodesh Adar*, the month we become aware that א' דר, Hashem dwells in the world. And He continues to do miracles for us, although hiddenly. The

avodah of this month is to keep our eyes open and to recognize the א' דר, Hashem Who is here, with us, saving us, helping us all the time.

The Bnei Yissaschar (Adar 1:8) teaches that when one knows that everything is from Hashem, he will succeed. But if he thinks that nature rules, he will fail.

"This is Chazal's intention, הרוצה שיתקיימו נכסיו יטע, בהן אדר 'If one is seeking to ensure that his property will remain with him, he should plant in *adar*.' This means he should remember the miracles of Adar, the miracles that are dressed within nature (and he must know that the fact that he bought this property was also through Hashem's miracles). When one believes this, his property will remain with him.

The Ahavas Shalom *zt'l* teaches, רעוא דרעון אשתכה, "immense desire and love is found."

Hashem loves us and desires us, and this love is revealed in this month.

The custom of the *tzaddikim* of Ziditchov was that they wouldn't say *tachanun* the entire month of Adar. The Yeshuos Yaakov *zy'a* (the Lemberger Rav) met with Rebbe Eizik of Ziditchov *zy'a* and said, "Tell me a source for this custom of not saying *tachanun*. And don't tell me a source from kabbalah or chassidus. I want to hear a halachic source."

Rebbe Eizik Ziditchover answered, "The entire month Adar is a *yom tov*, as it states, והחודש אשר נהפך להם מיגון ומאבל ליום טוב לשמחה, 'the month that went from distress to joy, from mourning to *yom tov*...' (Esther 9:22). From here we see that the entire month of Adar is a holiday, and we don't say *tachanun* on a holiday."

Let's begin this month on the right foot with saying *Tehillim*. *Davar Nechmad* (from Reb Sariyah

Dibletzky *zt'l*) writes, "Reb Eliyahu Cohen and Reb Chaim Abulafiyah *zt'l* heard from Reb Chaim Vital's students that one... should say the entire *Tehillim* on *rosh chodesh Adar*. This will fix his *neshamah*, among other wonderful benefits. It is proper that those who fear Hashem should gather together and institute this *tikkun*."

Shabbos Shekalim

The Midrash (*Tanchuma, Tisa 3*) states, "Moshe said to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, 'When I die, I won't be remembered anymore.'" Hashem replied, "I swear, just as you are presently giving them the *parashah* of *Shekalim* and you raise their heads, similarly, בכל שנה ושנה שקראין אותה לפני כאלו את עומד שם באותה שעה וזוקף את ראשן every year, when they read this *parashah Shekalim* before Me, it will be like you are standing there at that time, and you raise their heads."

What does it mean that Moshe raises our heads? We will explain it in two ways. We begin with the following explanation:

When people experience problems, they often stand bent over and stooped because they feel weighed down, and they can't raise their heads. But when we read *parashas Shekalim*, we can hold our head erect because all our problems disappear. This is one of the *segulos* of this holy Shabbos. It is when the bent can become straight, and those who have *tzaros* can be freed from their problems.

Parashas Shekalim is *mesugal* for earning wealth.

The גנוי ישראל from Rebbe Yisroel of Chortkov *zt'l* writes, "Every Shabbos of the four *parshiyos* brings down bounty to the world... On *parashas Shekalim*, the bounty for *parnassah* and wealth..."

Similarly, the Ateres Yeshuah (*Moadim, Mishpatim, Shekalim*) writes, שבת שקלים מסוגל, "Shabbos *Shekalim* is *mesugal* for drawing down *parnassah*."

The Ateres Yeshuah concludes with a Rashi at the beginning of *parashas Mishpatim*, and this is how he reads Rashi's words: אמר לו הקב"ה למשה, לא תעלה על דעתך לומר, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe, 'Don't think it is sufficient that you teach them Torah, alone. You have to grant them *parnassah*, too, because *אם אין קמח אין תורה parnassah*, there is no Torah. לכן נאמר אשר תשים לפניהם, בשלחן הערוך ומוכן לאכול לפני האדם, You must give them a set table, prepared to eat. You must bestow *parnassah* on Klal Yisroel, too.'" As we explained, this happens on

Shabbos Shekalim, when Moshe Rabbeinu comes to raise our heads.

In the years the Beis HaMikdash stood, every year, during Adar, people donated *machatzis hashekel* to the Beis HaMikdash to buy the *korbanos tamid* for the upcoming year (from Rosh Chodesh Nisan until next year's Nisan). The Imrei Yosef of Spinka *zt'l* explains that when preparing the *korbanos* of the forthcoming year with their *machatzis hashekel* donations, they davened that the *korbanos* should be accepted in heaven.

Chazal (*Brachos 26:*) tell us תפילות כנגד תמידין תקנון, that Chazal established the three daily *tefillos* to correspond to the *korban tamid*.² Therefore, the Imrei

2. Corresponding to the morning and afternoon *tamidim* we have *Shacharis* and *Minchah*. Nighttime, the fire on the *mizbeich* continued burning the flesh of the *korbanos*. As Chazal say, אברים ופדרים שלא נתעכלו מבקרב קרבים והולכים כל הלילה, "Flesh and fats that weren't consumed [in the fire] by day were brought all night." This is represented by *Maariv*.

Yosef said, just as the *shekalim* prepared the *korbanos* for the entire year, similarly, on this Shabbos, we prepare the *tefillos* for the whole year. Therefore, on this Shabbos, we can daven that Hashem should answer our *tefillos* that will be said (from Rosh Chodesh Nisan until next year's Rosh Chodesh Nisan).

The brothers Reb Meir and Reb Zanzvil Kahana z'l from Drogmeresht came, for the first time, to the Imrei Yosef of Spinka, for Shabbos Shekalim, in תרמ"ג. They hoped to merit their salvation by this great tzaddik, as both were *baalei yesurim*: Reb Meir didn't have children, and his wife was ill. Reb Zanzvil had children, but they were always sickly and weak.

Reb Meir spoke with the Imrei Yosef on *erev Shabbos* and expressed his distress that he doesn't have children and that his wife is ill. The Imrei Yosef told him to give a *pidyon* of

one hundred gold coins, and he will have a *yeshuah*.

There was no time for Reb Zanzvil to speak with the Rebbe on *erev Shabbos*, During the Friday night tish, when chassidim customarily pledge to give wine for the Rebbe's tish, the Rebbe blessed Reb Zanzvil that his children should have a *refuah sheleimah*. And the Rebbe added that on Shabbos Shekalim one can request that all one's *tefillos* be answered (and he told them the explanation we wrote above).

Needless to say, both of the brothers merited their salvation and became devoted chassidim of the Imrei Yosef.

So, Shabbos *Shekalim* is an opportune time to daven that all the *tefillos* we will say in the upcoming year should be answered. There is also a date that is *mesugal* to daven that all the *tefillos* that were already said, until that date, should go

up to Heaven and be answered. That date is Rosh Chodesh Adar.

The Chozeh *zt'l* (*Diorei Emes, Terumah*) teaches this lesson from the Gemara (*Beitzah 16:*), הרוצה שיתקיימו נכסיו, "If one is seeking counsel to ensure that his property will remain with him, he should plant an *adar*."

What is a person's נכסיו, property? It is primarily his good deeds because these are his property and portion forever. In particular, נכסיו are his *tefillos*, as נכסיו comes from the word כסוי, concealed, and Chazal tell us that *tefillah* is very precious, but its greatness is hidden from people.³

"Thus, Chazal are saying, הרוצה שיתקיימו נכסיו, if a person wants his *tefillos* should be answered, יטע בהן אדר

אדר, he should pray for that on Rosh Chodesh *Adar*. [He should pray on Rosh Chodesh Adar that all the *tefillos* should go up before Hashem and be answered]. And then his prayers will go up [before Hashem]... and everything will be *chesed* and compassion."

In the *yotzros of mussaf*, we plea, אור פניך עלינו נשא, "May Hashem shine His face onto us." What happens when Hashem shines His face on us? Reb Chaim Brim *zt'l* said that the answer can be found in the last *brachah* of *Shemonah Esrei*, for we say, כי באור פניך נתת לנו... תורת חיים ואהבת חסד וצדקה ורחמים ושלום, by Your face's shine You gave us Torah, kindness, *tzedakah*, compassion, and peace." This is what we can be *zoche* to on this Shabbos, *Shabbos Shekalim*, when

3. As Chazal say, רברים העומדים ברומם של עולם, "*Tefillah* is from the things that stand in the highest places of the world" concealed from people's eyes.

Hashem shines His face on us.

In review, when we read *parashas Shekalim*, Moshe Rabbeinu raises our heads. We are not stooped over, which means we aren't broken, distressed, or suffering; instead, we walk erect. Everything is good, there is wealth, salvations, and Hashem will shine His face on us. We can also pray that our *tefillos* should be heard. These are among the benefits we can attain on *Shabbos Shekalim*, when Hashem shines His face on us.

Meeting Hashem

Reb Pinchas Koritzer zt'l (Imrei Pinchas 4:225) was known to say, "I can't wait for the "four parshiyos", when I will meet Hashem!"

Similarly, the Ruzhiner Rebbe zt'l said that each

week of the "four parshiyos" represents another letter of Hashem's name הוי"ה, and that during these Shabbosos, one can become attached to Hashem.

In Megillas Esther it states (Esther 7:8) ופני המן חפרו, "Haman's face was covered." The Alshich HaKadosh explains that Persia's ancient law (and of many countries) was that if a person who was convicted and sentenced to death saw the king, he was pardoned. When Achashveirosh's anger was aroused on Haman, someone quickly covered Haman's face so that Haman wouldn't see the king's face and therefore be pardoned.

But during the "four parshiyos", we merit seeing Hashem's face, *keviyachol*. And when one sees the King, all his sins are pardoned.⁴

4. The mitzvah of *shekalim* atoned for the *aveiros* of the Jewish nation. As it states (30:13), זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים... The Yerushalmi

We discussed above that on Shabbos Shekalim Moshe Rabbeinu raises our head. We can explain it to mean that we should raise our eyes to our Father in heaven. We should raise our ambitions for loftier matters. This Shabbos is our opportunity to lift our heads and to acquire holier pursuits.

Animals walk with their heads to the ground; humans don't. As the Gemara (Chagigah 16.) says, "People are similar to malachim in three ways... one aspect of their similarity is the way they walk erect

like the malachim." There's a lesson to be learned in this; human beings should elevate themselves above the mundane. One's heart and eyes should be focused on Hashem and not directed towards the ground, which represents gashmiyos pursuits. We can acquire this attitude on Shabbos Shekalim.⁵

A Fiery Coin

The Midrash Tanchuma (9) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu took a coin of fire from under His throne, He showed it to Moshe and said, זֶה יְתֵנוּ, 'This is what

writes that כל העובר על הפקודים על הפקודים means "all those who transgressed Hashem's mitzvah" and sinned with the *egel*. With the *machatzis hashekel*, לכפר על נפשותיהם, they will have atonement.

The Sfas Emes (*Shekalim* תרל"ג) explains that this atonement is also applicable in our times, because we desire to give the *machatzis hashekel* (and will be explained later on, the primary part of the mitzvah is the desire to give).

5. It states (*Devarim* 12:23), ולא תאכל הנפש עם הבשר, "Don't eat the soul with the meat." The Vilna Gaon zt'l said that this hints to us that when one eats meat, he shouldn't be so excited and steeped into the food until he eats up his *neshamah*, too.

they should give." It seems that Moshe didn't understand which coin should be given until Hashem showed it to him. This brings up a few questions: (1) Why didn't Moshe understand what a machatzis hashekel is? was it difficult to understand which type of coin should be used? (2) Why was the coin under Hashem's throne? (3) Why was it a fiery coin and not a silver coin?

We can explain that Moshe didn't have difficulty understanding what a machatzis hashekel was. Moshe's wondered how a half-coin could accomplish so much. How could such a small donation cause זקיפת ראש, the heads of the Jewish nation will be raised? Earlier, we discussed two types of זקיפת ראש. One explanation is that the tzaros disappeared, and Bnei Yisroel were able to raise their heads with wealth and with pride. Another explanation is that

with this mitzvah, Klal Yisroel raises their heads above the mundane and their gashmiyos pursuits and can therefore be involved in Torah and mitzvos. Moshe's question was, how can this inexpensive and easy mitzvah accomplish so much?

Hashem showed Moshe a fiery coin to teach him that it is the fire and hislahavus that Klal Yisroel have when they perform the mitzvah that is so precious to Hashem. Hashem keeps this coin under His throne because the hislahavus is so dear to Him.

The Chidushei HaRim zt'l was once in Germany, and he heard the rav of a beis knesses ask in his drashah, "Why did Hashem show Moshe a מטבע של אש, a coin of fire? Hashem could have shown Moshe a silver coin! The answer is that Hashem did not only show him the size and weight of

the coin. Hashem also showed him how the coin should be given. It should be given with a fiery hislahavus.¹⁶

This explains why we give a half-shekel and not a whole shekel. This also explains why the Torah tells us (30:15), העשיר לא ירבה, והדל לא ימעט ממהצית השקל, "The wealthy can't give more, and a pauper can't give less than a half-shekel." If the most important part of the mitzvah was the monetary gain, why isn't the mitzvah to give a whole shekel, and why can't the wealthy give more? Evidently, the uniqueness of the mitzvah is not the value of the coin given. It's the emotions that come along with the mitzvah that count.

So, the mitzvah of giving the machatzis hashekel has two components: to give the coin, and the hislahavus that comes along with performing the mitzvah. Today, we can't give a machatzis hashekel in the Beis HaMikdash. That part of the mitzvah we can't fulfill today. However, the other part of the mitzvah, the hislahavos, the desire to perform the mitzvah, can be performed even in our times, and as we are explaining, the fiery emotions are the focal part of the mitzvah.

As the Sfas Emes (Shekalim תרל"ג) writes, "The korbanos were accepted and wanted by Hashem because of Bnei Yisroel's desire, and this desire

6. The Chidushei HaRim asked the Kotzker Rebbe *zt'l* how this rav perceived this true interpretation. The Kotzker Rebbe replied that the German Yidden excel in the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*, and therefore they can come to such explanations.

exists today, too – perhaps, even more than before."⁷

At mattan Torah, the Jewish nation was completely purified. Then they sinned with the Golden Calf, and their yetzer hara returned.

Hashem told them that the solution was, וזה יהנו, and Hashem showed Moshe a coin of fire. This means, serve Hashem with fire, with hislahavus, and the yetzer hara will back off and leave you alone.⁸

7. Some explain that we give a half of a shekel to teach us that Hashem wants us to do whatever we can, even if we can't finish the good deed. We do what we can, and Hashem completes the deed for us.

The Yeitav Lev *zt'l* asked, why does a person need to do *teshuvaah* for his *aveiros*? Why can't he claim that he is an אנוס (that he sinned against his will) because no one wants to commit *aveiros*. It is just the *yetzer hara* and the weakness of human nature that causes people to sin.

But his excuse isn't entirely valid, because he could have done the best he can. He is guilty for not performing his maximum. This is hinted at in the words (30:12-13), ונתנו איש כופר נפשו לה'... מחצית השקל, he needs atonement, because he didn't even give a half shekel. He didn't even do all he was able to do.

8. The *yetzer hara* is called, בלבין החציפין, chutzpadig dogs. Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter *shlita* explained it with an analogy:

When you are among a pack of dogs, don't show that you are afraid, then the dogs will leave you alone. But if you show that you are afraid, they'll run after you. The same is with the *yetzer hara*. If one is meek and afraid of the *yetzer hara*, the *yetzer hara* can overpower him. But if he serves Hashem with fiery excitement and confidence, the *yetzer hara* will respect him, and he won't try to entice him to sin.

Reb Mendel Putterfass *zt'l* told a tale of how Czar Nikolai's army

won a battle without a single gunshot. The soldiers in the Czar's army would fight by day, and drink at night. One soldier drank too much, and when his troop moved on, he was still sleeping. Upon awakening, he knew that he had to catch up with his battalion quickly, but first he wanted something to eat.

It was Friday night. He came to a Jewish home and helped himself to the pot of steaming, hot *cholent*. He mounted his horse, placed the pot of hot *cholent* on the horse's mane, and set off to find his division. The hot *cholent* burned the horse's back, which spurred the horse to run quickly. It didn't take long before he reached his battalion, but his horse kept charging forward. He reached the front. The enemy soldiers saw him coming, and they were afraid. They assumed he surely had a very strong weapon, since he isn't afraid to face them alone. They fled in panic. In this manner Czar Nicolai's army won the war, without firing a single gunshot.

Reb Putterfass said that we can learn from this how to battle with the *yetzer hara*. If one shows courage and *hislahavus*, the *yetzer hara* will be afraid of him, and leave him alone.

Reb Chaim Vital *zt'l* taught how one can banish a *dibuk* (a spirit, a soul, which attached itself to a human being and afflicts him): "Know that the most important factor is that you should strengthen your heart like a warrior without any fear. Don't be weak, because then the spirit will be strong, and he will not heed your words [when you tell it to leave]." This is because all *kelipos*, and as we mentioned, all *yetzer haras*, lose their strength before someone who isn't afraid.

This information leads us to the following story about the Turei Zahav. The story was told by Rebbe Moshe Kobriner *zt'l*, who read it in the *pinkas* (ledger) of a *chevrah kaddishah*:

A *dibuk* became attached to a girl and people rushed to the Turei Zahav to ask for his assistance. The Turei Zahav went to the home of this afflicted girl and as soon as he entered the room, the *dibuk* turned around, faced the wall, and announced, "*Baruch haba Rabbeinu Hagadol baal Turei Zahav* (welcome, the great Rav, author of *Turei Zahav*)." People asked the *dibuk*, "Why do you call him 'Rabbeinu Hagadol,' and why did you turn and face the wall?"

The *dibuk* replied, "A *rasha* isn't permitted to look at the face of a

Towards the end of parashas Mishpatim, it

tzaddik, therefore I turned around. And I know that his name is Rabbeinu Hagadol baal Turei Zahav because that's how he's called in heaven."

The Turei Zahav said, "If this is how I'm called in heaven, then I demand that you leave this girl right away." The *dibuk* left.

The parents of the girl were wealthy and wanted to give a lot of money to the Turei Zahav to express their appreciation, but the Turei Zahav didn't want to accept the gift.

The Turei Zahav wore a very old, worn-out talis. "He will surely accept a new one, so he could keep the mitzvah of tzitzis in a more beautiful fashion," the father assumed. But the Turei Zahav turned down that offer as well. The Turei Zahav explained, "I want to wear my old talis, and when I die, I want to be buried in that talis, because my talis can testify before the court in heaven that I never said a word of *tefillah* without *kavanah*."

Once, the Kedushas Yom Tov was attending a rabbinic meeting, together with his child, Reb Yoel (who later became the Satmar Rebbe *zt'l*). Reb Yoel davened with *hislahavos*, making unusual motions with his arms. One of the Rabbanim at the meeting thought it funny, so he asked Reb Yoel, "Is it Purim today?"

The young Reb Yoel wittily replied, "If I knew that I would be meeting with Haman, I would bring along my *grager*." Because Haman and Amalek make fun of *yiras shamayim*. As it states, אשר יקר בדרך, "Who cooled you off when you were traveling on the way." We shouldn't be afraid to serve Hashem with fervor.

Once, in the winter, a chassid made a hole in the ice that froze over a lake and was *tovel* there. But then he couldn't find his way out. People saw this and panicked. The Yesod HaAvodah *zt'l* said, "Nu, he should say *Nishmas*." His intention was that the heat produced from saying *Nishmas* with *hislahavos* will melt the ice and he will be able to get out.

states (24:17), מראה כבוד ה' באש, אוכלת בראש ההר

The Kedushas Levi explains, "When a person serves Hashem, he brings pleasure to Him. If a person wants to know whether Hashem enjoys his service, he should see if he has a yearning and hislahavus to serve Hashem, like a burning fire. That is a clear sign that Hashem enjoys his service, and Heaven helps him and sends into his mind holy thoughts [so he can serve Hashem with hislahavos]. This is the meaning of the pasuk, ומראה כבוד ה' באש אוכלת, if his heart is burning to Hashem."

Once there was a very wealthy person. The only thing that matched his vast wealth was his stinginess. He would often pride himself with his yichus, telling everyone that he was descendent of the Magen Avraham.

The Rav of the community often spoke to this wealthy man, trying to convince him to give money to tzedakah. The Rav's passionate plea would have opened anyone's heart, but the stingy man's heart remained cold and unmoved. Frustrated, the rav exclaimed, "You aren't an einikel of the Magen Avraham!"

The man was upset, "Why do you say that I'm not a descendant of the Magen Avraham? Did you ever check my yichus? And besides, why is it your business? And what does it have to do with our current discussion?"

The rav replied, "Everyone who opens up the *Shulchan Aruch* knows that you can't learn *Magen Avraham* without the commentary, *Machatzis HaShekel*. They go together. I tried for a half hour to get a half-shekel out of you, but I failed. So, if there is no *machatzis hashekel*, I

know the Magen Avraham is not here either."

We are all descendants of Avraham Avinu. And since the *magen Avraham* is

here, there also should be the *machatzis hashekel*, which means that we need to have *hislahavvus* when fulfilling Hashem's will.